

MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES

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KEATS'S WAILFUL CHOIR OF SMALL GNATS

The purpose of this paper is to show that, in the ode "To Autumn," the melancholy effect of Keats's personal experience and recollections of his reading underlie the wailing of the gnats in lines 27-29:

Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies.¹

The flying and the wailing of the gnats are reminiscent of the swarming and murmuring of the gnats in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (I. i. 16).² The gnats of Spenser fly at sunset like those of Keats (see line 25), but, unlike those of Keats, they annoy with their "feeble Stings." For the figurative use of the word "choir" as applied to animals, Keats had two notable but diverse antecedents.

¹ *The Poetical Works of John Keats*, ed. H. W. Garrod (Oxford, 1939), p. 274.

² In his copy of the poem (*The Works of Mr. Edmund Spenser in Six Volumes*. [Volume One]. [London, 1715], I, 280), which is in the Houghton Library of Harvard University, Keats underlined all the verses of the stanza:

As gentle Shepherd in sweet Even-tide,
When ruddy *Phoebus* 'gins to walk in West,
High on an Hill, his Flock to wewen wide,
Marks which do bite their hasty Supper best;
A Cloud of cumbrous Gnats do him molest,
All striving to infix their feeble Stings,
That from their noyance he no where can rest,
He brushes oft, and oft doth mar their Murmurings.

Shakespeare's powerfully figurative term "choirs" in the line "Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang" in Sonnet 73 (which Keats scored marginally in his personal copy)³ at once comes to mind. Yet there existed a probable contemporary source for Keats's "choir" of gnats "borne aloft / Or sinking." Two naturalists, William Kirby and William Spence, who produced in 1815 and 1817 a popular work entitled *An Introduction to Entomology*, pointed out that the insect "tribes of *Tipulidae* (usually, but improperly, called gnats) assemble . . . at midday when the sun shines, and form themselves into *choirs*, that alternately rise and fall [Italics mine] with rapid evolutions." Kirby and Spence added: "These little creatures may always be seen at all seasons amusing themselves with these *choral dances* [Italics mine]."⁴ The naturalists reported that in the month of September another group of gnats called Ephemerae swarmed over a river at sunset: "The *choral dances* consisted principally of Ephemerae . . . *alternately rising and falling*" [Italics mine].⁵ In Keats's recollection, the choirs of *Tipulidae* gnats that alternately rise and fall fused with the choral dances of the Ephemerae alternately rising and falling over a river in September. The coalesced imagery agrees with Keats's choir of gnats "borne aloft / Or sinking" among the river shallows⁶ near Winchester in September.⁷ There is evidence

³ Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, *Keats's Shakespeare: A Descriptive Study Based on New Material* (2d ed., London, 1929), pp. 39-40.

⁴ (2 vols., London, 1817), II, 4. Volume I appeared first in 1815, and a third edition was issued with Volume II in 1817. See G. T. Bettany in *DNB* s. v. "Kirby, William (1759-1850)," and B. B. Woodward in *DNB* s. v. "Spence, William (1783-1860)."

⁵ II, 6. Kirby added (II, 6-7) that Alexander Pope, from the terms in which his description of the sylphs is given in *The Rape of the Lock* (Canto II, 59-68), ". . . seems to have witnessed the pleasing scene here described." Kirby concluded his description with the following suggestion: "I wish you may have the good fortune next year to be a spectator of this all but celestial dance."

⁶ Keats wrote "sallows" in the original draft of the poem (which is in the Houghton Library); he also wrote "sallows" in the autograph copy of the ode which he sent to Woodhouse (also in the Houghton Library). The spelling "shallows" appeared in the 1820 text of the poem.

⁷ Keats described the countryside near Winchester that furnished the setting of the ode (*The Letters of John Keats*, ed. Maurice Buxton Forman [3d ed., London, 1948], pp. 375, 384). The volume will be cited hereafter as *Letters*.

that, while Keats was at Winchester, he thought of the *Ephemera* insect, for in the journal letter to George and Georgiana, September 18, 1819, Keats compared the teeth of his newly born niece Georgiana Emily to those of a "May fly."⁸ Keats also specified the size of the *Ephemerae* as "small gnats" (line 27). The smallness of a gnat was associated by Keats with the words of Imogen's expression of grief in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* (I. iii. 18-22), which, according to Charles Cowden Clarke, poignantly moved the young Keats in the lines:

. . . Till the diminution
Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle;
Nay follow'd him till he had melted from
The smallness of a gnat to air; and then
Have turn'd mine eye and wept.⁹

The wailfulness of the sound produced by Keats's choir of gnats may be accounted for by the theories of the passions current in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.¹⁰ Kirby and Spence gave a ready explanation: "The *passions* . . . which urge us to various exclamations, elicit from insects occasionally certain sounds. Fear, anger, sorrow, joy, or love and desire, they express in particular instances by particular noises." It seemed to the two naturalists that "these little aëry beings apparently so full of joy and life" were "amusing themselves with these choral dances." Wordsworth's view of the joyful passions of insects was similar. Kirby and Spence (II, 4-5) quoted his "beautiful lines" in *The Excursion* (IV. 439-448) concerning the "summer Flies." Inasmuch as Keats was a fervent admirer of Wordsworth's *The Excursion* (*Letters*, pp. 79, 80), it is in order to note that Words-

⁸ *Letters*, p. 402. Gilbert White had listed the *Ephemera* as a May fly ("Ephemera Cauda Biseta. May fly.") in *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne* . . . , ed. John White (London, 1813), II, 516.

⁹ Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, *Recollections of Writers* (London, 1878), p. 126.

¹⁰ To cite but one esthetician, Archibald Alison (*Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste* [Edinburgh and London, 1790], pp. 144-145), had observed that ". . . the most insignificant Sounds become Sublime, whenever they are associated with images belonging to Power, or Danger, or Melancholy, or any other strong emotion . . ." and that in the "buzz of Flies" against the deep silence of a summer's noon there is "something strikingly sublime. . . ."

worth's flies "hum their joy" (iv. 448).¹¹ But to Keats, the sound of the gnats was "wailful," signifying their urge to mourn. Kirby and Spence had pointed out that the adult stage of the Ephemerae, after a brief period of a couple of hours of swarming, ends in extinction (I, 285). Moreover, the French naturalist Buffon, with whose works Keats was familiar (*Letters*, pp. 313, 456), had spoken of the jeopardy that attended the brief existence of the May flies:

. . . the little strangers live but an hour or two. . . . They are of a most delicate nature; the slightest touch is fatal to them; if they even hit against each other they instantly die. . . . The males, quite inactive, and apparently without desires, seem only born to die . . . after fluttering for an hour or two, they drop upon the land, and conclude their existence.¹²

Wordsworth, in *The Excursion*, was personally attuned to hear the joy of life in the buzzing of the summer flies. Keats, on the other hand, was disposed to hear in the whirring of the May flies not the sound of animal joy but the wail for approaching death. Keats's experience here was similar to that in his epistle to his friend Reynolds on March 25, 1818 (*Letters*, p. 127), in which he described the "eternal fierce destruction" of life.

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YEATS'S "THE CAT AND THE MOON"

The cat went here and there
And the moon spun round like a top,
And the nearest kin of the moon,
The creeping cat, looked up.
Black Minnaloushe stared at the moon,
For wander and wail as he would,
The pure cold light in the sky
Troubled his animal blood.
Minnaloushe runs in the grass

¹¹ *The Excursion, Being a Portion of the Recluse, A Poem* (London, 1814), p. 161.

¹² *Natural History of Birds, Fish, Insects, and Reptiles, and Upwards of Two Hundred Engravings* (London, 1798), v, 259. There were many editions in French and English of Buffon's *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, 44 vols., Paris, 1749-1804.

Lifting his delicate feet.
 Do you dance, Minnaloushe, do you dance?
 When two close kindred meet
 What better than call a dance?
 Maybe the moon may learn,
 Tired of that courtly fashion,
 A new dance turn.
 Minnaloushe creeps through the grass
 From moonlit place to place,
 The sacred moon overhead
 Has taken a new phase.
 Does Minnaloushe know that his pupils
 Will pass from change to change,
 And that from round to crescent
 From crescent to round they range?
 Minnaloushe creeps through the grass
 Alone, important and wise,
 And lifts to the changing moon
 His changing eyes.¹

It has been suggested that a possible source of the cat-moon relationship in Yeats's poem is Demetrius's *On Style*.² While it is impossible to deny such an ascription, it seems to me more likely that the ultimate source, for Yeats, is Madame Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*, wherein we read:

When the Egyptians portrayed the moon as a *cat*, they were not ignorant enough to suppose that the moon was a cat; nor did their wandering fancies see any likeness in the moon to a cat; nor was a cat-myth any mere expansion of verbal metaphor; nor had they any intention of making puzzles or riddles. . . . They had observed the simple fact that the cat saw in the dark, and that her eyes became full-orbed, and grew most luminous by night. The moon was the *seer* by night in heaven, and the cat was its equivalent on the earth; and so the familiar cat was adopted as a representative, a natural sign, a living pictograph of the lunar orb.³

Later we read: "The eye of the cat . . . seems to follow the lunar phases in its growth and decline, and its orbs shine like two stars

¹ W. B. Yeats, *Collected Poems*, New York, Macmillan, 1933, pp. 191-92. Reprinted with the kind permission of The Macmillan Company.

² Grover Smith, "Yeats, Minnaloushe and the Moon," *Western Review*, 11 (Summer, 1947), 244.

³ H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, Covina, California, Theosophical University Press, 1925, I, 304. Blavatsky is quoting a book by Gerald Massey, *Lunolatry Ancient and Modern*, which I have not seen. The first edition of *The Secret Doctrine* appeared in 1888.

in the darkness of the night."⁴ It is reasonable to believe that Yeats had read these specific passages; but in point of fact he would not have needed to read Blavatsky to come by such ideas, for he may have talked about cats and the moon (and other such subjects) with Madame Blavatsky or some of her disciples any time after he became a member of the Theosophical Society in 1887.⁵ In connection with this poem, T. R. Henn has noted that a character in Yeats's early story *John Sherman* (published in 1891) had seen a little black cat leaping about in the moonlight, perhaps in the same fashion as the Minnaloushe of this poem.⁶ It may be that the sight of Minnaloushe awakened in Yeats's memory the cat of the early story, which in turn carried him back to Blavatsky's account of the cat symbolism of the Egyptians.

It is my chief purpose to point out a hitherto unnoted source, but a few sentences of explication may not be amiss. Grover Smith and Henn agree that the cat is symbolically man; indeed, Henn quotes Yeats's preface to his play which bears the same title as the poem: "[I] allowed myself as I wrote to think of the cat as the normal man and of the moon as the opposite he seeks perpetually, or as having any meaning I have conferred upon the moon elsewhere."⁷ In other words the moon is, in Yeats's vocabulary, the Mask of the cat. Assuming Yeats's familiarity with the cat-lore in Blavatsky's book, and taking seriously his statement of intention in the preface to the play, we may judge that the poem is based on a combination of two ways of looking at a cat. If we think of Minnaloushe as a "living pictograph of the lunar orb," we can easily see the pertinence of referring to the cat as the "nearest kin of the moon"; and perhaps it is this close kinship of equals, so to speak, that Yeats has in mind when he suggests that the moon "may learn [from the cat] a new dance turn." At least, this is one explanation of a difficulty Smith has noted.⁸

As Mr. Smith says, the poem is doubtless related to Yeats's

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 387.

⁵ Richard Ellmann, *Yeats, the Man and the Masks*, New York, Macmillan, 1948, p. 62. Yeats was a member of the Theosophical Society for three years, Ellmann says. Of course, Yeats's interest in esoteric subjects was lifelong; see the *Autobiography of William Butler Yeats*, New York, Macmillan, 1938, pp. 79 ff., 151 ff., *et passim*.

⁶ T. R. Henn, *The Lonely Tower*, London, Methuen, 1950, p. 178.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 178-79.

⁸ Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-44.

phasal and cyclic theory of history, of human incarnations and of world epochs; but I think it is so related in only very general terms, and that the chief point of the poem, supported by Yeats's preface, is the perception of unlikeness in likeness in the cat-moon relationship. Yeats emphasizes the similarity of the two in such phrases as "nearest kin" and in observing that both go through phases from "round to crescent": both are ineluctably linked to their destined rounds. But he insists upon their opposition or difference by setting against the "pure cold light in the sky" the "troubled . . . animal blood" of the cat, which, representative in this context of man, wanders and wails; whereas the moon, in its serene preordained progress through phases, is beyond troubled animal questionings.

Ordinarily Yeats would treat such a theme, the conjunction of natural and supernatural, with high seriousness, as he does, for example, in the magnificent "Leda and the Swan." But Yeats is also capable of playing with the terms of his system, as he does in some of the lines of "Solomon to Sheba" and "Solomon and the Witch." It seems to me that the tone of "The Cat and the Moon" is playful and that Yeats obviously enjoys pushing his phasal system and his theory of the Mask to such whimsical lengths as to entertain the notion that Minnaloushe in his (human) arrogance is on equal terms with the moon, and even, in a crowning stroke of *lèse-majesté*, that the moon may learn from the "important and wise" cat a new dance.

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"THE INSOLENT RUDENESS OF DR. SWIFT"

It is not surprising to discover Swift being accused of "insolent rudeness" by a member of the episcopal bench. His relations with those "worthless bishops" sent to the Church of Ireland from England—all of them devoted Whigs, of course—are known to have been something other than placid and agreeable, yet the details of the various quarrels are not abundant. Although I propose to treat this subject more fully elsewhere, I should like to present at the moment some hitherto unpublished information

which reveals a bishop's side of one of these quarrels and which corrects and supplements Swift's commentators, who have reported the incident only from his vantage.

The quarrel in point occurred in 1718 at the diocesan visitation of Bishop John Evans of Meath, the diocese where Swift held three country parishes *in commendam* with the deanery of St. Patrick's. When Evans first entered into the see in 1716, Swift made some friendly advances which went unacknowledged; and in 1717, when he proposed a curate for one of his parishes, the bishop refused a license.¹ Irritated and resentful, Swift may have been not unwilling to quarrel openly. The incident at the visitation is reported, favorably to Swift, by his friend Patrick Delany, who heard it from one present on the occasion. In the course of the proceedings, we are told, the Bishop "reflected with some roughness (which the Dean considered as rudeness) upon one of his clergy." The following day Swift took notice of the treatment accorded one of his brethren. He "rebuked the Bishop, apparently, in the most gentle and respectful manner, and with great coolness of temper; but at the same time, with as much severity, and fine satire, and in one of the finest speeches that ever was uttered, as I have been assured by a good judge then present."² Bishop Evans failed to observe Swift's "gentle and respectful manner." In reporting the incident to William Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, he justifies his censure of the three clergymen (not one, as Delany reports) whom Swift defended, and characterizes Swift's arraignment of him as a "Vile attempt":

I could entertain your Grace with y^e insolent rudeness of Dr Swift att my Visitation last week where he had never appear'd before, he endeavour'd to arraign me before my Clergy for my unkind carriage towards 3 of them, who were all of them very criminall as plainly appear'd when I stated the Severall Cases. So y^t I hope he has gain'd nothing by this Vile attempt.³

F. Elrington Ball, the editor of Swift's correspondence, has

¹ *The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift*, ed. by F. Elrington Ball (London, 1910-14), III, 37.

² [Patrick Delany] *Observations upon Lord Orrery's Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift* (London, 1754), pp. 216-17. See also dubious version by Deane Swift, *Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character of Dr. Jonathan Swift* (London, 1755), pp. 272-4.

³ Evans to Wake, June 20 [1718], in *Wake Correspondence*, Vol. 12, Christ Church, Oxford.

dated this contretemps in August, 1718.⁴ Evans's letter to Wake, however, was written June 20; and another Whig bishop, Nicolson of Derry, a friend of Evans, refers to the incident in a letter of July 8.⁵ Ball obviously is in error. He was apparently unaware that Swift had attended two visitations within a period of less than three months. The first was the diocesan visitation held by Evans in June, where Swift publicly indicted the bishop. The second, which Ball has confused with the earlier one, was the Archbishop of Armagh's visitation of Meath, held in the third week of August.⁶ In the interval between the two, Swift's name was bandied about by the Whig bishops, who always watched his behavior warily; and there may have been a plan to censure him for his contumacious attitude toward Evans. In any case, it was expected that the quarrel between the dean and the bishop would get an airing at the metropolitan's visitation in August—so Bishop Nicolson of Derry wrote to Wake at Canterbury. He had heard, he informed the Primate,

that y^e Bp of Clogher (in his approaching Metropolitan Visitation of y^e Diocese of Meath, for our Primate) was like to have y^e rehearing of a late Dialogue betwixt y^e Bp of M[*eath*] and Dean Swift, whereof your Grace has already had an Acc^t. I have (as desir'd) given Notice of this to my Friend: Though my Informer knows not whether his L[*ordship*] or y^e Dean is y^e Complainant.⁷

The resolution of this quarrel must be left in obscurity. I have not been able to discover whether it actually came under discussion as expected. Probably it did not; or if it did, the outcome brought no satisfaction to Swift since in two of his letters to Evans at a later date he refers to the public arraignment but significantly does not mention a rehearing.⁸ The bishop, it appears, had not passively submitted to Swift's open chiding, whereupon Swift had announced that he would thereafter refuse to attend the bishop's visitations,

⁴ *Corres.*, III, 9, n. 3.

⁵ William Nicolson to Wake, July 8, 1718, in *Wake Correspondence*, Vol. 12.

⁶ The Archbishop's visitation was held at Trim, as Swift indicated in a letter (see *Corres.*, III, 9). This is confirmed by his Account Book of 1717-1718, which shows that he spent the third week of August at Trim (see Forster Collection, 510.48.D.34/6.).

⁷ See note 5.

⁸ *Corres.*, III, 37, 86.

being unwilling (he later declared) "to hear any more very injurious treatment and appellations given to my brethren, or myself." True to this promise Swift sent proxies to the visitations of 1719 and 1721, which the bishop, after making some public reflections on Swift, refused to accept. In the correspondence that followed, Swift accused Evans of showing "the long, sedate resentment of a Spaniard."²

This is only one of several quarrels between Swift and the bishops; and the incident of his "insolent rudeness" though minor has significance in its revelation of his strained relations with the episcopal bench and of his protective attitude toward the lower clergy. These in turn are matters which help to explain his pessimism concerning the Church of Ireland.

LOUIS A. LANDA

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A SOURCE FOR SPENSER'S MALBECCO

Among the best of Spenser's stories is the swiftly told tale of Malbecco and Hellenore, the chief subject of Cantos ix and x of Book III of *The Faerie Queene*. It is not easy to forget Malbecco's mad flight from his lecherous wife, happy among the satyrs, to the inaccessible rocks

Where he through priuy grieffe, and horreur vaine,
Is woxen so deform'd, that he has quight
Forgot he was a man, and Gealosie is hight. (x, 60)

Spenser's inspiration for this grim figure is to be found in a fable told by way of digression in George Gascoigne's "Adventures of Master F. J."¹

Gascoigne tells his ingenious little fable as a comment on the jealous torment which afflicts F. J. when he begins to suspect that

² *Ibid.*, 87.

¹ First published in 1573 as part of *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* (edited by C. T. Prouty, University of Missouri, 1942) and republished in 1575 as part of *The Posies (The Complete Works of George Gascoigne)*, edited by J. W. Cunliffe, Cambridge, 1907, Vol. 1). Quotations from the fable are from the Cunliffe edition, pp. 421-4.

his mistress, Dame Elinor, is playing him false. This Suspicion gnawing at F. J.'s bosom was once a "dreadful dastard" who immured his wife and himself in an impregnable fortress protected by a variety of safeguards including double doors trebly locked and quadruply barred. His wife at length found her existence insupportable and murdered him. Hell devised for him the most extraordinary torments, but since they did not compare with the pains he had endured on earth he found them quite tolerable. In order to punish him properly, therefore, the infernal powers in council assembled decided to send him back to the upper world, there to suffer forever. When body and soul were accordingly reunited, he underwent a metamorphosis, person becoming personification: "he became of a suspicious man, *Suspicion* it selfe." Realizing that his wife was a murderer, he fled from her in a desperate search for a secure habitation. At last he found a narrow opening at the top of a huge rock overhanging the sea; into this crevice he thrust himself to live, ever after, in miserable fear.

The jealous man turned Jealousy and the suspicious man turned Suspicion both fly wildly from their wives to skulk perpetually in inaccessible caves. Details which Spenser borrowed from Gascoigne confirm the relationship between the two. Spenser's

rockie hill,
Ouer the sea, suspended dreadfully (x, 56)

is Gascoigne's "rock, more than sixe hundreth Cubits high, which hong so suspiciously over the seas. . . ." Spenser's rock seems about to topple over; it

euer and anon
Threates with huge ruine him to fall vpon (x, 58)

Gascoigne's looks "as though it would threaten to fall at euerye litle blast." Malbecco is so fearful that he sleeps with one eye open (a circumstance the more remarkable because he is elsewhere described as one-eyed):

he dare neuer sleepe, but that one eye
Still ope he keepes (x, 58)

Gascoigne's Suspicion likewise: "betweene fearefull sweate and chyvering cold, with one eye opened & the other closed, he stole sometimes a broken sleepe, devided with many terrible dreames."

Even when Malbecco differs from Suspicion he betrays his origins.

Although Spenser's jealous man tries to commit suicide, he never quite dies and goes to Hell. Nevertheless, whoever sees him

With vpstart haire, and staring eyes dismay,
From Limbo lake him late escaped sure would say. (x, 54)

No infernal council condemns Malbecco to an everlasting life-in-death

Yet can he neuer dye, but dying liues (x, 60)

Spenser nowhere says that Malbecco is metamorphosed into a "hellish byrde" who "shricketh contynually lyke to a shrich owle." In the opening lines of Canto xi, Jealousy is hellish, but not a bird:

O hatefull hellish Snake: what furie furst
Brought thee from balefull house of *Proserpine*

But the bird idea is vivid in Spenser's mind:

High ouer hilles and ouer dales he fled,
As if the wind him on his winges had borne (x, 55)
on the rockes he fell so flit and light,
That he thereby receiu'd no hurt at all,
But chaunced on a craggy cliff to light;
Whence he with crooked clawes so long did crall . . .
(x, 57)

If Malbecco is related to Suspicion, Malbecco's wife Hellenore must be of the family of Master F. J.'s Mistress Elinor. F. J. addresses a poem to his Elinor under the name of Helen, much to Elinor's annoyance. In a long paragraph Gascoigne expands upon this circumstance, reporting F. J.'s excuse to the effect that he thought the names were the same, and besides "Helen" with its reminiscence of the Trojan Helen was more appropriate than "Elinor" in a poem devoted to the commendation of beauty.² Spenser's Hellenore, therefore, is Helen-Elinor.

Hellenore and Elinor are alike in more than name. They both demean themselves gently and courteously, they are both remarkably pretty, they both cuckold their husbands. Although there is no point-for-point correspondence between Paridell's seduction of Hellenore and F. J.'s of Elinor, the affair in each case is conducted on a highly sophisticated plane and in each the lady is as forward as her lover. Despite their polished manners, they are promiscu-

² *Ibid.*, p. 415.

ous creatures; Paridell and F. J. do not complete the tale of their lovers. Elinor's affair with F. J. does not last long; she turns from him to an individual denominated the Secretary: "He was in height the proportion of two *Pigmies*, in bredth the thicknesse of two bacon hogges, of presumption a Gyant, of power a Gnatte, Apishly wytted, Knavishly mannered, and crabbedly favord."³ Only a hopelessly lecherous woman would have made such a choice, Gascoigne implies. And it is to a similar degradation that Spenser condemns Hellenore, content to spend her life in service to a band of goats, her lust finally satisfied in the embraces

of a *Satyre* rough and rude (x, 48)

This is Gascoigne's Mistress Elinor; it is not Helen of Troy.

Apart from its historical interest, the sole virtue of Gascoigne's "Adventures of Master F. J." is its ingenuity. This virtue Spenser rejected. From the unpromising materials that were left he made the powerful and moving tale of Malbecco and Hellenore.

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MILTON'S TWO-HANDED ENGINE¹

Few lines in Milton have offered happier hunting for the scholarly detective than the grim threat of St. Peter in "Lycidas" (lines 130-131):

But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.

It is hard not to believe that every possible interpretation, however reasonable or fantastic, has been offered. But there actually is

³ *Ibid.*, p. 392.

¹ Not until this article had been written and accepted for publication did I notice that another critic had proposed the same explanation, though immediately withdrawing it as unlikely. But Mr. Edward S. LeComte's recent note on the subject in *Studies in Philology* (XLIX, 548-550) referring to his mention of the theory earlier (*ibid.*, XLVII, 590) as something that "a lover of novelty might even proffer [as] a twenty-ninth explanation" at least entitles him to chronological, even though unwilling, credit.

another, and in some ways it seems more plausible than previous guesses. Why everybody has overlooked an explanation so simple I cannot understand; and I submit it with proper diffidence and with no further assurance than that it has at present one believer.

One fact which some of the critics have overlooked, and which is necessary to a proper understanding of these lines, is Milton's real purpose in the poem. His fundamental topic is the true reward of living, whether good or bad. The death of King is the *occasion* of the poem, but the *subject* is the broader question raised by it, namely whether fame (or its opposite, infamy) is a "plant that grows on mortal soil." Most of the poem is devoted to providing the answer No, which is the answer to be expected of any Christian poet. And since St. Peter's speech is the culmination of the section which raises and answers that question about sinners, his threat has to be appropriate to that theme. This fact rules out any merely worldly reference like the execution of a person like Laud or the two houses of Parliament. To balance the everlasting salvation promised to the good shepherds in lines 76-84, St. Peter, who "foretells the ruine of our corrupted Clergie" (subtitle), must predict their everlasting damnation. No other interpretation fits the poem.

What, then, is the "engine"? Unnoticed by most commentators, apparently, a two-handed engine which is entirely adequate has already been mentioned only a few lines earlier in the introduction of St. Peter. In fact, except for his "mitred locks" (112), it is the single item of description given about him:

Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain) (110-111).

The keys have probably been overlooked because, though they are "massy," the critics have been on the watch for something more gigantic. Verity, for example (*Comus and Lycidas*, 1919, p. 147), thought that in calling the engine two-handed, Milton meant that it had to be "wielded with both hands because of its size and weight." But this inference is not necessary. As Verity shows in his own glossary (p. 165), all that "engine" means is "'a contrivance,' i.e. something made with *ingenuity* (Lat. *ingenium*); hence 'instrument.'" As for the two-handedness, we need only to visualize Peter's wielding the golden key of salvation with his right hand and the iron key of damnation with his left, just as the

Son places the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left at the Last Judgment (Matthew 25: 33). Keys which are big enough to admit the sheep to "the kingdom, prepared for you from the foundation of the world" and the goats to "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25: 34, 41) carry enough "weight" to satisfy anybody. Besides Christ gave Peter the keys most solemnly (Matthew 16: 19).

But is the imagery consistent? Can one "smite" with keys? In the Bible, which always permeated Milton's mind, "smite" is a popular word and very ominous. When applied to God, it is seldom specifically connected with a definite instrument. To be sure, God sometimes smites with his rod (Isaiah 11: 4) or with his sword (Zechariah 13: 7). But in numerous other passages the instrument is less definite but more lethal like a plague of frogs (Exodus 8: 2), a pestilence (Exodus 9: 15), a consumption and fever and other ills (Deuteronomy 28: 22), or blindness (2 Kings 6: 18). Still oftener God merely smites, with no instrument at all, but with a result all the more terrifying because of the vagueness. He smites Egypt (Exodus 3: 20), the first-born of Egypt (Exodus 12: 12), the Philistines (2 Samuel 5: 24), the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 21: 6), and even the whole earth (Malachi 4: 6). Thus the keys of Heaven and Hell would be an entirely adequate "engine" with which to smite.

Moreover, the Biblical smiting tended to be complete. When God smote the first-born of Egypt or Israel or "the winter house with the summer house" (Amos 3: 15) or "every horse . . . and his rider" (Zechariah 12: 4), the blow was final. No victims escaped. This same finality marks also the two-handed engine.

Finally, as a curious coincidence only, I quote a comment from Alexander Cruden's *Concordance* (already much used) under the word "smite," which he offers as an explanation of "He [God] shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth" (Isaiah 11: 4): "*He shall destroy ungodly, earthly-minded men, who are enemies to his church and people, by the word of his mouth.*" If we remember the common idea that St. Peter is the agent of God in this process, Cruden's comment is almost an explanation of Milton's lines.

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CHAUCER'S COMIC VALENTINE

If *The Parlement of Foules* pictured the birds assembling on Saint Valentine's Day for the sole purpose of chirruping about the mating season, it would be a literary exercise interesting only to ornithologists and bird fanciers. The poem is given universal interest when Chaucer has the birds speak like men and act like them. Some readers have even viewed it as a serious treatise, seeing in its convocation either a weighty discussion of true and false felicity¹ or a scholastic disagreement between realists and idealists,² although this would hardly be Chaucer's usual practice in a treatise, as in his *Boethius*, which is a direct translation of a philosophical classic and in no sense the settlement of a debate between two systems of thought. Since the assembly of birds is obviously comparable to a parliament of men, Mr. Gardiner Stillwell has rightly analyzed the poet's plan in recently stating that "Chaucer's poem is comic."³ There is always patent comedy in any situation describing human behavior by animal representation, as in the comparison made in the Parliament of 1371, where the clergy were likened to the owl who "had lost her feathers,"⁴ so that Chaucer's assembly of birds, when viewed in the light of the Good Parliament of 1376,⁵ is seen to be unmistakably humorous in its basic framework.

The only time Mr. Stillwell's interpretation is strained occurs when he argues that Chaucer's purpose is ironic rather than simply humorous. No one could possibly cavil with Mr. Stillwell's statement: "Goose, duck, cuckoo, turtle-dove, tercel, formel, merlin—they are all comic figures."⁶ But it is significant that they are all given their own natural characters and are not made ironic caricatures. For example, the foolish cuckoo is not endowed with the wisdom of an owl, nor the awkward goose with the sedateness

¹ R. M. Lumiansky, "Chaucer's *Parlement of Foules*: a Philosophical Interpretation," *RES*, 24 (1948), 81-89.

² B. H. Bronson, "In Appreciation of Chaucer's *Parlement of Foules*," *Univ. of Calif. Pub. in Eng.*, Vol. 3 (1935), No. 5, pp. 193-224.

³ G. Stillwell, "Unity and Comedy in Chaucer's *Parlement of Foules*," *JEGP*, 49 (1950), 470-495.

⁴ H. Braddy, *Chaucer and the French Poet Graunson* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1947), p. 84.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Stillwell, *op. cit.*, p. 487.

of a swan. The fowls of ravine, on whom the plot centers, are described with equal realism. Inasmuch as the formel is a sovereign lady, it may appear contradictory that the three tercelles are permitted to do the choosing, until one recalls that this was the condition prescribed by Dame Nature: "By my statut and thorgh my governaunce, / Ye come for to cheese" (387-388). The situation, it is clear, would not be ironic, as Mr. Stillwell asserts, unless the circumstances were reversed, with the formel, contrary to Dame Nature's rule, making all the proposals herself. Since Chaucer presents no such burlesque of Nature's law, Mr. Stillwell appears wrong in stating that "The poet's humor touches even the fowls of ravine, and does so in such ironic fashion as to make one skeptical of the view that Chaucer's intention was the paying of a courtly compliment to actual persons whose marriage was in process of being negotiated when the poem was written."⁷

The foregoing statement of Mr. Stillwell, a reference to the betrothal of Prince Richard and Princess Marie—in the negotiations for which Chaucer played an official part—is objectionable upon an historical basis. He seems to believe that the poet would not include a courtly compliment in a comic poem. If he is right, then the obvious agreement between the *Parlement* and this contemporary event of 1377 is a meaningless coincidence.

In considering this problem, a short review of Chaucer's procedure in a number of other occasional poems should prove instructive. The balade *Truth*, which was written to cheer his friend Sir Philip la Vache, contains in its "Envoy" a humorous reference to him as "thou Vache." Moreover, Chaucer's *Complaint of Venus* refers with good-natured humor to the "curiosite" of his friend Sir Oton de Graunson's versification at the same time that it compliments him as "flour of hem that make in Fraunce." Furthermore, that the poet regarded a comic poem as a fit setting for a courtly compliment is established by the occasion of *The Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse*. Of this poem, which is addressed to King Henry IV, Professor Robinson says: "Chaucer's complaint, with its humorous adaptation of the language of a lover's appeal to his mistress, is certainly one of the happiest variations on the well-known theme."⁸ From this evidence, it is perfectly clear that the

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 471.

⁸ F. N. Robinson (ed.), *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (New York, 1933), p. 981.

poet, instead of being averse to the device, was actually prone to use compliments in a humorous setting. As a great humorist, Chaucer evidently recognized that the effectiveness of the compliment would be thus enhanced.

Indeed, now that the *Parlement* has been placed in the realm of comedy, one may well wonder if it did not have the same purpose as the comic *Complaint of Chaucer to his Purse*. Henry IV, whom the poet compliments as "conquerour of Brutes Albyon," was crowned king on September 30, 1399; about a fortnight later, on October 13, he promptly rewarded Chaucer for faithful service with a pension of forty marks. In the *Parlement* the poet says that he hopes to "mete som thyng for to fare / The bet"; on April 11, 1377, he received, as a reward for his services in negotiating the betrothal of Richard and Marie in February, a "special gift"⁹ of forty pounds. In accord with these circumstances, the unity of the *Parlement*, with its complimentary allusion to this betrothal, is nowhere more apparent than at its end, where the birds sing a roundel whose "note," Chaucer says, "imaked was in France" (677).

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SCRIBAL ERRORS IN MANLY AND RICKERT'S *TEXT*

All students familiar with Manly and Rickert's *The Text of the Canterbury Tales* probably share my respect for the magnitude and complexity of the work. Some questions have arisen, however, about their editorial principles,¹ and even about the trustworthiness of their data. This note is concerned with a minor aspect of that problem: the number and significance of the accidental errors in the work. Since a revised edition is extremely unlikely, owners and users of the reference work may appreciate an opportunity to eliminate typographical errors in the critical text itself (Volumes

⁹ R. D. French, *A Chaucer Handbook* (New York, 1927), p. 59.

¹ See G. Dempster's series of articles in *PMLA* (LXI, 379-415; LXIII, 456-484; LXIV, 1123-1142), in which she supplements and modifies Manly's conclusions.

III and IV). Also a sampling of the inaccuracies to be found in other volumes of the work may prove useful, since an estimate of its accuracy will affect one's procedure in many projects involving the *Canterbury Tales*.

The following list of scribal or typographical errors in the critical text is, I believe, exhaustive, although the situation does not admit of certainty: A 2998, *nay* for *nat*; B 817, *wo* for *so wo*; B 1134, *day to day* for *day to nyght*; D 170, *on* for *of*; D 844, *I wol* for *I*; D 1002, *what* for *what that*; E 1845, *oude* for *loude*; F 692, *He* for *And he*; C 475, *ynough* for *noght ynough*; C 806, *agon* for *gon*; B 2532, *greet deliberacioun* for *greet diligence and greet deliberacioun*; B 2958, *more* for *mowe*; I 363, *sooth* for *dooth*; I 861, *she* for *it*.² All of these can be corrected with relative ease in a copy of the work, but there is one much more serious slip: B 2503, which reads

And after this thanne shal ye kepe you wisely from all swich manere peple
as I haue seyd bifore, and hem and hir conseil eschewe.

is entirely omitted.³

As Manly noted in his preface, the work could not "hope to have escaped the unescapable doom" of editors. But it is a little ironical to see the basic types of scribal corruption so well exemplified: haplography (B 817, D 1002, C 475), substitution of a more familiar word (B 1134, B 2958), and eyeskip (B 2532). And the reader who checks the context of B 2503 will find it an even more remarkable example of eyeskip.

Probably no Chaucerian will ever be in a position to prepare a relatively exhaustive errata sheet for the other sections of this monumental work. But many will have occasion, as I have had, to study a limited aspect of this mass of data, and to discover errors of varying significance. Perhaps students will be interested, therefore, in seeing a sample of the errors in each section, with whatever implications they may have for the accuracy of other data.

The only clear instance of faulty report in the description of MS Fi (my primary concern) is the statement that the extra leaf

² Eight of these errors were listed by G. Dempster, *PMLA*, LXI (1946), 412, fn. 193.

³ All these slips are easily established, and shown to be accidental, by comparing the text with the Corpus of Variants.

in quire 27 begins with F 1636.⁴ It actually begins with B 1575, and the next quire with B 1637 — a detail which bears upon the Fi scribe's difficulty in obtaining a portion of *CT*. In the second volume, which traces the affiliations of the MSS, I found no scribal errors in the sections concerned with MSS Fi and N1.⁵ But typographical errors appeared in the supplementary chapters: once 2100 is written for 3100,⁶ and again in the list following SNPT, 326-27 should be 326-37.⁷

Checking MS Fi word for word against the Corpus of Variants (the last four volumes) also brought to light several accidental errors. One at least seems patently typographical: B 2279, *wol* for *wel*. Others probably reflect the difficulties any editor would face in distinguishing substantive from orthographical variants; for example, should minute examples of haplography (A 2222, *vlcanus* for *Vulcanus*; A 2480, *goddes* for *goddesse*) or of dittography (A 2730, *cowardry* for *cowardy*; I 685, *forslewetheth* for *forsleweth*) be ignored? If some of these variants were overlooked rather than dismissed, so in all likelihood were A 1034, *mornynge* for *morwe*; B 2307, *entet* for *entente*; B 2363, *hize* for *his*; I 793, *ravynous* for *rauynes*.

Very rarely did the editors fail to record omissions in MS Fi, and never one of more than a single word: A 1257, *man*;⁸ D 802, *yet*; D 1073, *men*; I 781, *the . . . the* and a few others. Equally rare are the failures to record dittography, such as B 2411, *where he whether he* for *wheither he*; G 374, *his his* for *his*. Among other typical inaccuracies are the failures to record an eyeskip (A 2408), inversions (A 3602, E 126), and substitutions (D 1828, E 706, E 846, E 1474, B 227). Finally, on three occasions the editors miscalculated the length of passages omitted from MS Fi, each time by one line: D 498-500 for 497-500, B 1304-10 for 1305-10, G 1054-55 for 1354-56. Considering the number of such excisions from the MS, and the efforts the scribe made to conceal them, however, this is a remarkably accurate performance.

⁴ *The Text*, I, 165.

⁵ But I found occasion to challenge their conclusion that MSS Fi, N1, and Ha5 are affiliated from F 1510 to the end of FKT (II, 312).

⁶ *The Text*, II, 401.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 516.

⁸ A mistake which paradoxically reflects extreme care: the Fi variant for *some man* is said to be *somen*. Actually the MS has *some* with a long decorative mark over the *om*.

The Corpus of Variants was compiled largely, of course, by editorial assistants, who inevitably varied in accuracy and policy. One implication of these data, however, is that if they made no more serious errors than these in copying the variants of a late and very corrupt MS, they probably achieved even greater accuracy in dealing with the textually important MSS. Certainly the death of one editor and the exhaustion of the other as the project neared its completion would account for considerably more errors than any search can ever reveal.

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AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY THEFT OF CHAUCER'S PURSE

During the eighteenth century a large number of allusions to Chaucer appeared in British periodicals.¹ Many of these occur in connection with imitations of his style and method or with modernizations of some of his works. For example, there appeared in the *Universal Spectator*, about 1735, a story entitled "The Comic Gift or the Sumner's Tale: Imitated from Chaucer."² In 1721 was published *The Romance of the Rose. Imitated from Chaucer*.³ And in 1728 *Mist's Weekly Journal* contained *A Tale, literally translated from Xenophon, in the Stile and Manner of Chaucer*.⁴

These are but three of the myriad of imitations of the poet and of borrowings from his works. In most instances the debt to Chaucer is frankly acknowledged, but occasionally it appears obvious that the contributor intends that his offering shall be assumed to be original with him.

¹ See Spurgeon, Caroline F. E., *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion* (Cambridge, 1925), 3 vols.; Bond, Richmond P., "Some eighteenth century Chaucer allusions," *SP*, xxv (1928), 316-393; Bond, Richmond P., Bowyer, John W., Millican, C. B., and Smith, G. Hubert, "A collection of Chaucer allusions," *SP*, xxviii (1931), 481-512; and Boys, Richard C., "Some Chaucer allusions, 1705-1799," *PQ*, xvii (1938), 263-270.

² *Universal Spectator*, 3rd ed. (1756), III, 170-174.

³ Bond, *SP*, xxv, 323.

⁴ April 6, 1728, no. 155.

An interesting example of the latter sort can be found in *The Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure* for June 1747. In a section headed "Poems, Songs, Riddles, &c.," is printed the following short poem, which, like most other contributions of similar nature, is unsigned.

An extempore Complaint to my empty Purse.
 To thee, my purse, thus troubled, I complain;
 To thee, that art the cause of all my pain.
 Thy yellow gold is gone, and silver bright:
 Alas! I'm heavy, because thou art light.
 To thee, my purse, for mercy thus I cry;
 Be heavy once again, or else I die.

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A NOTE ON DONNE'S "ELEGY VIII"

The siege of Sancerra in 1573 is recalled by Donne in Elegy VIII:

Or like the skumme, which by needs lawlesse law
 Enforc'd, Sanserra's starved men did draw
 From parboild shooes, and bootes, and all the rest
 Which were with any soveraigne fatnes blest . . . (9-12)

Grierson's annotation on this passage—a parallel allusion in the sermons and Norton's extract from Martin's *Histoire de France*—hardly suggests the violence of the occasion which in turn produced the violence of the line. A more telling account is found in Jean De Lery's *Histoire Memorable de la Ville de Sancerre*, a work printed at La Rochelle in 1574.

De Lery, famous also as an early American tourist, writes:

[After eating cats, rats, mice, and dogs, the besieged begin to turn elsewhere for food]. Sur ce commencement de Iuillet restans encores environs vingt chevaux de service qu'on pensoit espargner pour l'extremité, le ventre qui n'a point d'oreilles, & la necessité maistresse des arts, en firent adviser aucuns d'essayer si les cuirs de boeufs, de vaches, peaux de moutons & autres (mesmes seichans par les greniers) pourroyent supplier au lieu de la chair & des corps. Et de fait apres les avoir pelees, bien raclees lavees, eschaudees & cuites, ils y prindrent tel goust que si tost que cela fut sceu, quiconque avoit des peaux, les accoustroit & apprestoit de

ceste facon, ou bien les faisoit rostir sur le gril comme tripes: que si quelqu'uns avoyent de la graisse, ils en faisoient de la fricassée, & du pasté en pot: autres en mettoient aussi à la vinaigrette. Mais entre les peaux celles de veaux se trouverent merueilleusement tendres & delicates, & en ay mangé de si bonnes, que si on ne m'en eust adverti, i'eusse estime avoir mangé de bonnes tripes de mollues. . . . Mais comme ainsi soit que ceux qui ont faim s'advisent de tout, les cuirs & les peaux commenceans à fallir, & à diminuer, les plus subtils & ingenieux commencerent à taster & faire essay du parchemin: ce qu'ayant bien succédé, la presse y fut telle, que non seulement les peaux de parchemin blanc furent mangées, mais aussi les lettres, tiltres, livres imprimez & escripts en main, ne faisant difficulté de manger les plus vieux & anciens de cent à six vingts ans. . . . Et afin que ce que i'ay dit du commencement (qu'on n'a point veu de plus extreme famine) soit mieux verifié, les licols, poitraux, croupiers & tous autres harnois de cheval (principalement de cuir blanc) tant vieux & usez fussent-ils, estoient coupez par pieces, bouillis, grillés & fricassés: & voyoit-on encores les trous des coustures sur les bancs, ou ils se vendoient bien cherement, & à grand'presse. Les enfans aussi qui avoyent des ceintures de cuir, les mettoient sur les charbons, & s'en desuinoyent comme d'un boyau de tripes. . . . Quoy plus? les rongneures d'esguillettes, de bourses, d'escarcelles & autres merceries de peaux n'estoyent pas iettees sur les fumiers, ains fricassées & mangées comme tripes.¹

The description of De Lery could have convinced Donne that Sancerra was the famine of famines and moved him to mention it as such in his writing. Were he not an Englishman, he would also have been impressed with French culinary skill.

D. C. ALLEN

"BLIND MOUTHS" IN *LYCIDAS*

In *Lycidas* (line 119) Milton was not the first to put the concepts "blind" and "mouth" together. As a classicist he must have been familiar with the "usage of transferring to one bodily sense the functions of another; e. g. Soph. *Œd. T.* 371, *τυφλὸς τὰ ὤτα*, Val. Flacc. ii. 461, 'caecus clamor,' Plin. *N. H.* xxxvii. 18, 'surdus color,' &c."¹ One thinks also of Lucretius's "o pectora caeca!" (2. 14). But there is a compound word in Greek which is prac-

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 133.

² *The Lycidas and Epitaphium Damonis of Milton*, ed. C. S. Jerram (London, 1881), p. 71, n.

tically equivalent to Milton's phrase. It is the adjective *τυφλόστομος*, meaning "with blind mouth" and used of rivers. Milton may have seen it in Strabo 4. 1. 8. Its etymon is obvious—*τυφλός*, "blind," and *στόμα*, "mouth."

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REVIEWS

The Legend of Noah: Renaissance Rationalism in Art, Science, and Letters. By DON CAMERON ALLEN. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949. Pp. viii + 221, with 24 illustrations. \$2.50 Paper; \$3.50 Cloth.

Intellectual history of the kind this book provides is rare on this side of the waters; it reminds us of Panofsky and the work of the Warburg Institute. The fascinating legend at its center is not left in a scholarly vacuum; it becomes a significant parable for the age in which our modern tensions between faith and reason were given dramatic focus. Rather than study the whole history of Noah, Professor Allen has chosen the Renaissance episode in which the great parable was in turn miracle, moral truth, natural fact, and the stuff of poetry and art.

Allen begins with three chapters which describe the eternity which lies around Noah's particular grain of sand. The first defines the three forms of knowledge, reason, faith, and tradition, and shows how the Fathers borrowed tradition from the pagans in order to keep the other two under societal control. As early as the fourth century the fideism of Ambrose ("we are bidden to believe rather than to inquire") is opposed by the semi-rationalism of Augustine ("believe that you may understand"). Aquinas, aided by the double vision of Averroes, achieves a temporary solution:

Much that can be learned by reason is not found by revelation; on the other hand, reason can learn something about the facts of salvation, but revelation has this knowledge too; and when reason is transcended, it is faith alone that can rise through the circles of Heaven to the flame-lit Throne of God.

Renaissance rationalism cracks the synthesis by admitting conflicting traditions, thus weakening tradition's force. Poet is separated from scientist, and the great age of reason distills both great poetry and those less attractive reaction products—astrology, necromancy, obscurantism. Neither Catholic nor Protestant had a monopoly of the three major attitudes towards reason, that it was

a dangerous and dubious gift, that it was man's hope, or that it was a modest gift provided that it did not conflict with revelation. Men like Bruno, Bacon, Cherbury and Descartes set the terms of the debate, but more typical of the time was Joseph Glanvill, "a sort of minor-key Hamlet or Faust," caught between desire and reason.

Allen finds the genesis of the poet's anti-philistinism in the Renaissance when, despite the common charge of atheism, most scientists were most respectable men and, as always, the best judges of the limits of their own closed systems. The skeptical chemist Robert Boyle warns his fellows against spiritual pride, while the poets remain the true magicians, "for good poetry is usually written by unsettled men." So reason is a fragile guide to Donne, science is practically but not theoretically valid to Greville, Sir Thomas Browne with all his scientific bent cannot reject the irrational, Butler attacks the virtuosi, and Milton distinguishes between licit and illicit knowledge. Only Cowley among the ranking poets anticipates the Augustans by declaring that Reason can "lead us to Heaven's door and let us look through the keyhole."

In his third chapter on "Reason and the Text of the Bible" Allen is the literary bull among the china of philosophy:

The earlier periods had no doubt about faith; they simply asked whether reason was a serf or might be permitted to vote in the plebiscite. Now faith had to be cherished, because reason, the bully, was nudging her away from the ballot box. The cause of this indecorum was, I believe, the new light that the rational critics and scholars were innocently throwing on the nature of the Scripture itself.

Luther attacks the Vulgate and the Tridentines defend it in a way which, as Beryl Smalley has shown, was never necessary in the Middle Ages. Protestants, more literal about the Hebrew text than Catholics had ever been about the Vulgate, come flush up against the problem of the Massoretic vowel-points; it is only an occasional William Fulke who can say that they are as sacred as the consonants, "and that Christ referred to them when he said that never a prick of the law shall perish." The Septuagint brings no further certainty. To this debate about the Lower is added that about the Higher Criticism, of which the pioneers are Spinoza, Isaac de la Peyrere, and Father Simon. This final ambiguous figure champions the Vulgate against Spinoza by discovering in the Pentateuch "a strange confusion in chronology . . . and a mixture of styles that indicate more than one author."

Rational exegesis, deprived of those honorable text-preserving devices, trope, allegory, and anagogue, completes the destruction of medieval synthesis and Biblical text. Faced by Joshua's arrested sun, the Renaissance Catholic abandons physics and allows a miracle, the Protestant attributes the darkening of the sky to a snow flurry, and Spinoza throws the whole phenomenon back on the psychology of Joshua himself, who thought the universe was

geocentric. Pursuing this exegetical conflict through the Noah story, Allen distinguishes some eighteen major motifs, and gives a detailed account of four of them: the ark's size and shape; the naming of the animals on the ark; chronology and its corollary, what pagan god or hero Noah represented; and the question of the universality of the Flood. The Fathers, fortified by miracle, did not concern themselves much with the Renaissance difficulty about where the water came from and where it went after the Flood was over. The liberal Catholic Pererius brings it from the air by a transmutation of elements; Vossius and Kirchmaier confine the universality to the inhabited portions of earth, Syria and Mesopotamia or, at most, Asia proper. The new scientists join the exegetes in trying to save universality. Sir Matthew Hale is one of the first to use the argument by fossils on mountains, that they are relics of the flood and not *lusus naturae*. The dominant argument of this and the next century was touched off by Thomas Burnet, with his complex hypothesis of the cracking of the earth's crust to form mountains and to cause a Deluge through the falling of earth into the watery center. Burnet's pious mechanism is merely a prelude to a sequence of books and pamphlets by Warren, Ray, Beaumont, Woodward (whose positivism, like many a modern one, reserves its proofs but says they are just around the corner, like prosperity), Whiston (whose 1696 comet theory was anticipated, as Allen might have mentioned, by the famous cometeer, Edmund Halley, in a paper before the Royal Society read in 1694), Lovell, Arbuthnot, Harris, Keill, and Catcott.

To this physical exegesis is added an anthropological dimension. "Man is an incorrigible genealogist who spends his whole lifetime in search of a father." Impelled by this quest, the forger Anniius of Viterbo created (more or less out of his own head, but I should add the qualification that he was helped by Isidore of Seville and the twelfth-century *Mirabilia Romae*) a full account of the wandering of Noah and his sons throughout Europe. Gerard Vossius (1626) was one of the first, as Allen says, to put the full quietus to this Dominican's fabrications, but we should remember that some of his fellow-Catholics attacked him in the sixteenth century, and that Raleigh was very skeptical in 1614. Postellus believes that Noah was the first druid, Lazius thinks he settled Austria, and Torniellus attributes the blackness of Ham's grandchildren to prenatal influence on the wife of Chus. How did the Indians get to America? Batman says Atlantis was the bridge; Grotius says the North American Indians are Scandinavians, the Yucatans Africans, and the Peruvians Chinese; Laetius calls them migrant Tartars; Manasseh ben Israel thinks they are the Lost Ten Tribes; Hornius favors the Phoenician theory. It is left for Isaac de la Peyrere to limit the Flood to the sinning Jews of Palestine, and to people the rest of the world with his pre-Adamites.

Poets and artists sought to give life to all this abstraction. The

poets, including Drayton, Du Bartas, Milton, and Vondel, contributed their share to the fictional account. The artists, lacking a discursive canvas, were more bound by the literal text. In one of the best portions of the book Allen traces the rich tradition from the prefiguration symbols of the Catacombs, centered on salvation and the Atonement, to the lithe limbs and humanitarianism of Michelangelo and the geometrical analyses of the ark's structure based on Buteo. "So in time the Deluge . . . comes to be a symbol of man's suffering and the eternal woes of men before the power of an angry Creator. We begin with Moses and we end with Kafka." The artist and the poet enamel "a lie of art by consciously or unconsciously collating it with truth of the first order. . . . The story of Noah lost its hard center of truth; and while this softening of the fact was taking place, the imagination of the artists was momentarily released and worked its will. But there was no truth with which this truth of a lie could be collated, and so within a short time this story ceased to stimulate the artistic imagination." Hence the poet again becomes as he has always been, the chief maker of myth, who strives, as Milton did, to make a poetic substitute for the old Catholic allegory, and to save the myth from the busy work of scientist and exegete. Poet and artist "turned to the observable facts of humanity which seemed to have more truth and more reality; for like most mortals, they were unaware that there is no reality, that all is shrouded in myth, symbol, and the rite of words." The legend survives in Campbell's *The Flaming Terrapin* and Day Lewis's *Noah and the Waters*, but here it is not that of the baptised and purified saving remnant but of the proletariat and its predictable élite.

So wise and witty a study is naturally the product of selection, and exhaustiveness is left for the reviewer, who must "strecche forth the nekke" like Chaucer's Pardoner. Perhaps the approach to the fideist Ambrose (4) could have been strengthened by reference to Tertullian's *credo quia absurdum* and by a reminder that Ambrose's attack on dialectic finds its counterpart in Aristotle himself (Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle*, Oxford, 1948, p. 378). The learned Renaissance interest in astrology (11) is not quite parallel to the medieval saint's life, for the aberrations of such legend were either creations of the folk or clear poetry, and the better writers, like Bede, kept the record clear enough. No doubt the Middle Ages was lacking in certain forms of humanitarianism (14), but it is a bit careless to forget St. Francis of Assisi or William Langland. It is true that Luther attacked Catholic allegory (43) as he did "rabbinical fables," but his Genesis commentary used both of them and, what is more, he created his own allegories—with Luther as the drunken and maligned Noah and the Papists as the scoffing Ham and the sinners drowned in the Flood. Though Allen is usually free from the pedantry of quoting in the original, he strains the common reader a bit with Spanish, Dutch, and the Hebrew alphabet.

To the literalism of the Protestant Whitaker (68), who declares "that there is but one true, proper and genuine sense of scripture," a literalism much like that of the less-inspired exegetes of the later Middle Ages, we should contrast Augustine's richly imaginative heaping up of interpretations, and his free willingness to harbor "any better interpretation" so long as the City of God is maintained (Book xv. ch. xxvi). No doubt the freedoms of Luther owe something to his favorite Father. In the light of medieval Biblical drama and early Christian poets like Avitus, it is unguarded to say that Tostado began the practise (75) of fictionalizing the thoughts of Noah. Allen, no doubt delighted by the classical sound of "Noachides" (114 and *passim*), uses it too narrowly to mean Sem, Ham, and Japhet; the word was commonly used to mean mankind, and confined as an epithet to limit the seven laws which Jews allowed as substitutes for the Mosaic code to Gentiles. There is contradiction in saying (153) that "no one [in Milton's day] any longer believed in spontaneous generation," for Athanasius Kircher (185) left the reptiles off the ark because they were generated from putrefaction, and this whole concept was the basis of the *lusus naturae* theory of fossils (even after Voltaire suggested that fossils were left on the Alps by pilgrims returning from Jerusalem).

Nobody will take these additions too seriously. The canvas is too large to contain all the grains of sand. Noah invented ships and carpentry and wine. But the true culture heroes were the exegetes, who out of his story and the dilemma of faith and reason erected modern sciences like comparative religion, zoology, chronology, textual criticism, geology, anthropology and ethnology, linguistics, and genetics, as well as the poets and artists, who then and now know how to keep a good parable from dying. For our time the prime inventor is the cautious scholar and philosopher, and Allen is both of them.

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The Life Records of John Milton. By J. MILTON FRENCH. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. Vol. I, 1949, pp. 446; Vol. II, 1950, pp. 395. \$5.00 each.

With the publication of two volumes, Professor French has reached the half-way point in his ambitious venture of making easily available the large number of details which have been accumulating for generations about Milton's life. The Milton Life Records, like those of Chaucer, are particularly important because of the poet's many-sided activities. Hence the present volumes require 786 pages plus indexes to cover the period from December, 1608, through February, 1651. Every student of Milton must

be under obligation to the editor for his inclusiveness, his accuracy, and his sane evaluation of the wealth of material which he has now made easily accessible.

Unfortunately, however, the limitations which have guided the editor in his preparation of these vast materials are not made explicit in the preface to either volume. The first, indeed, remarks that "even unlikely traditions, early or late, when at all widespread, are included, if only to be exploded, so that readers will not think they have been overlooked." And yet the extent of such inclusiveness is made evident only in a note for an entry of 1628 (I, 148): the apocryphal story of Milton's mulberry tree at Cambridge "is recorded here, not because it is considered trustworthy, but because it seems desirable that all such gossip, however trivial or ill-founded, should receive fair treatment." Whether such a goal is entirely practicable or desirable is a matter for argument in modern scholarship, though a generation ago it was almost universally accepted as an ideal to strive for. Of such minutiae, Professor French for instance has included the publication of works wrongly attributed to Milton's father (I, 3, 26), has mentioned a great many portraits alleged with little reason to be of the poet—some of which seem not even to be in existence today (I, 52, 147, 278, *et al.*), and reprints good portions of the forged letters to Voiture, Molière, and Louis XIV (II, 56 *et seq.*). As an extreme example, we find that Hugh C. H. Candy recorded on the flyleaf of his copy of John Diodati's *Pious Annotations* that Milton may have "made, or supervised," the translation—an attribution which was not printed until the present edition and which the editor rejects (II, 83). Even with the goal of completeness, it seems that the relegation of such materials as these to an appendix would have strengthened the utility of the book at the same time that it reduced its length and expense.

Another difficult problem for the editor of such volumes is the way they will be used. Will they be read through, or will the student instead either consult the excellent indexes or turn to the chronological section with which he is concerned? Few, it seems, will read through the volumes. But if the student uses them in the normal way, he will occasionally miss some important statement of editorial policy—for instance, the principles used in printing the State Letters. Here the general statement is made under one of the letters (II, 241) rather than in the general introduction where it would be immediately evident. Contrariwise, the introduction to Volume I establishes a good-sized list of abbreviations for the more important reference works—abbreviations which actually are used very little in either volume.

Another outcome of the purely chronological organization is that it gives the impression of much greater accuracy than is actually possible. The unhappy fact is that each work of Milton, an event

in time, must willy-nilly be squeezed somehow into a time sequence regardless of the imperfections of our knowledge. Inevitably the book thus gives the impression of greater accuracy than the facts warrant, despite Professor French's warning comments. All too often he must date an event, which may have occurred at any time over the course of two or three years, under a year heading which may or may not be accurate. Just when did the elder Milton retire to Horton? We are given two dates: 1630 and summer (?) 1632. For another example, "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," and "Arcades" are ticketed in 1631, even though this may be two or three years wrong. It is unfortunate that the editor found it impossible to begin with entries covering a number of years, followed by those which can be given with more precision.

A last point which the completely chronological method brings to attention is the fact that sometimes a single source will deal with several different dates, requiring more or less complete duplication of that entry. Perhaps the most extended example is that of the receipt of interest from Richard Powell, which appears regularly on each December 12 from 1628 to 1643. We can only hope that Mr. Powell was as faithful in his payments. But at times such repetition becomes irksome pedantry. Thus in January (?) 1646 Milton received a request from Rouse for copies of his writings (II, 138) to which he seems to have responded promptly (II, 139). Both entries include in part an identical quotation from his Ode to Rouse, together with an identical translation, only two pages apart. Or there is the identical repetition of part of a letter to Diodati (I, 98, reprinted on 99), a letter to Gill (I, 288, reprinted on 289-90), and the news of a letter from Diodati (I, 344) duplicated in Milton's answer (I, 345).

Aside from such relatively minor flaws as these, the *Life Records* are outstanding for their accuracy in reproducing all the minutiae of the texts, Latin and English, abbreviations and all. Apart from the printing of the *-us* ending as 9 rather than as 9 (I, 193), one can hardly find a flaw in either volume. The proofreading, indeed, has been well done. I have noted only *edited* for *translated* (I, 27), a bracket omitted (I, 40), and *Voltaire* for *Molière* (II, 57). Such sumptuous volumes as these demand the best in such meticulous details; Professor French is both level-headed in his judgments and extremely precise in his texts.

But perhaps the question of greatest immediate interest for the scholar is the amount of new material which Professor French has first published here. One may remark at once that it is not extensive and that there is more in Volume I than in Volume II. The new material, taken as a whole, does not alter in any significant way the picture which has so often been drawn of Milton, though it does fill in a few gaps. We have, for instance, a good many new legal papers relating to the elder Milton's work, the exact date of

Charles Diodati's matriculation at Trinity College, the correction of earlier theories about the ownership of the house on Bread Street, the exact date of the baptism of Mary Powell, and the addition of some (unimportant) marginalia. On the other hand, it is astonishing to find in this complete collection practically no mention of Milton's failing eyesight.

All in all it is comforting to find so little that is new, for the very lack suggests that most of the material is now at hand. I remember the helpless look of the guide who was asked by a pretty young speleologist how many miles of cavern remained undiscovered in Mammoth Cave. Answering any such question of completeness is, of course, ultimately impossible; yet the fact that Professor French has not discovered facts which significantly change our conception of the poet's life is at least suggestive of near-completeness of our materials in this respect. Hence we may conclude that Milton studies are reaching maturity—at least for the time being—and these fine volumes of the *Life Records*, the result of over twenty years of methodical research, not only mark this maturation but provide a welcome and authoritative collection of source data to which students of the poet will be indebted for a long time to come.

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The Senecan Amble: A Study in Prose Form from Bacon to Collier. By GEORGE WILLIAMSON. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951. 377 pp. \$7.50.

During this past generation the technique of seventeenth-century verse has been zealously explored, but the technique of the century's prose has remained relatively neglected. G. P. Krapp's *Rise of English Literary Prose* (1915) stopped not far beyond 1600. The late Morris Croll's notable series of articles, mainly on the Anti-Ciceronian movement, and Professor R. F. Jones's likewise notable series on the effects of science on Restoration prose, have, to be sure, become part of the scholar's consciousness; and so too has W. Fraser Mitchell's big book on pulpit oratory. But these, however illuminating, and some lesser items have been special studies, and there has been no comprehensive survey of the great body of great prose. Professor Williamson's book is another special study, though it is a central one that covers much ground. It is not, he says, "a history of prose style in the seventeenth century, but an account of its most incisive pattern." "Yet," he adds, "as it deals with one of the extremes that serve to define contemporary styles, it becomes more than the story of a fashion." By hewing closely to the Senecan line (or interwoven lines) the author achieves

continuity and coherence, and he can go further than anyone has hitherto gone into the varieties and mixtures of modes and patterns within the Anti-Ciceronian movement; in the process he confirms or modifies Croll's account in a number of ways. By virtue of his well-digested learning, his acutely discriminating definitions and discussions, and the considered and precise solidity and authority of his treatment, Professor Williamson has produced what will be a standard work—though it will take even scholarly specialists some time to assimilate 370 pages so packed with detailed information and ideas.

By the same token a reviewer cannot do much in the way of summary. Professor Williamson is in general more concerned with rhetorical theory than with practice. A large part of the book is, quite properly, devoted to ancient theories and models of style, which were so much in the minds of the more conscious stylists on the Continent and in England. The author examines and carefully distinguishes the numerous varieties of Greek and Roman, medieval and Renaissance style, from Gorgias to Lipsius and Montaigne. The definition of classical patterns remains a dominant preoccupation, since they furnish criteria for the theories of English style that developed from them. Apart from a discussion of Euphuism, Professor Williamson does not get really into English ideas until his fourth chapter, "Aculeate Style and the Cult of Form"; Lyly's evolution from the schematic to the pointed style leads into Hoskins, Cornwallis, and Bacon. Then, after a chapter on Lipsius, we come to "Bacon and Stoic Rhetoric." While everyone knows of Bacon's condemnation of Ciceronianism, not everyone remembers that he condemned Senecanism too, since "both set words above matter or rhetoric above philosophy" (p. 153); but Bacon "preferred the Senecan style without its cult of word-play" (p. 185). In chapter seven, "Pointed Style after Bacon," Professor Williamson starts with three tendencies that Croll found in Anti-Ciceronian style, the curt (Lipsius), the loose (Montaigne), and the obscure (Bacon); the first two Croll associated with Seneca, the third with Tacitus. While these were mixed, Professor Williamson would take "the curt as the norm, from which style could move in two opposite directions" (p. 189); the curt style was predominant before the Restoration, the loose after. Early Senecan style tended toward both pointed brevity (as in Andrewes) or plain brevity (as in Bacon). Here the author makes a rapid survey of the stylistic doctrines of Burton, Hall, Feltham, Jonson, Milton (an unregenerate Ciceronian), Hobbes, Glanvill, Dryden, and others. "Scheme and Point in Pulpit Oratory" are illustrated from Andrewes, Thomas Adams, Hall, John Wilkins, Obadiah Walker, South, Tillotson, et al. "Senecan preaching wavered between the two extremes of brevity, leaning to the pointed in Andrewes and to the plain in Hall" (p. 246), and the plain of course was to win out.

The account of Wilkins makes him more Senecan than scientific, and the chapter on "Reform and the Royal Society" is largely an elaboration of this view. "As it was the Anti-Ciceronian style that Bacon advanced, so it is the Anti-Ciceronian style from which the Royal Society programme derived" (p. 276). In the reform of prose, before as well as after the Restoration, Wilkins was the leading agent.

On the basis of available evidence the stylistic programme set forth by the *History of the Royal Society* seems to be indebted chiefly to the doctrine of Wilkins and the tumid exposition of Sprat (p. 294).

Wilkins's *Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language*, published a year later than Sprat's *History*, contains the same stylistic doctrine as the *History*; and this doctrine ultimately returns to his *Ecclesiastes*, where it is associated with Seneca, not with science (p. 295).

The argument is continued in the next chapter. In Cowley's view of style Professor Williamson finds no change that is to be attributed to the influence of the Royal Society (p. 322); and "Although Dryden mentions science, it is never in support of any qualifications of style" (p. 328). Obviously—and avowedly—Professor Williamson does not go along with Professor Jones's stress upon the scientific quest of exactness and plainness. If Professor Jones, with the zeal of a pioneer, perhaps gave too large and exclusive a role to science, Professor Williamson may perhaps be thought to minimize it unduly; there is, after all, some evidence for the association of precise expression with science.

In his final chapter Professor Williamson records the increased reaction against the earlier Senecan "wit" and the cultivation of an easy colloquial propriety; the great exemplar of both is Dryden. Writers now

sought a mean between the extreme of the curt Senecan and the copious Ciceronian styles: they found that mean in a loose but not sprawling style, which was closest to the conversational ideal of Seneca. Individualism in style had been checked by the formulation of general standards to which the individual was obliged to submit and by which he was disciplined if he rebelled. No one knew this better than Dryden, who helped to formulate the standards by which his style was criticized. Then a corporate criticism supported generally accepted requirements of style, which produced a common speech (p. 341).

As I have said, it is not easy to summarize Professor Williamson's book, and I have not done so. The chief reason is the refinement and density of the discussion. But also, if one may find a shortcoming in so substantial and valuable a book, the most interested reader may have trouble in following the argument; confronted as he goes along with a multitude of witnesses and particular ideas, he craves more guiding generalizations than the author has been disposed to give. Sometimes, too, he may ask if Professor Williamson is regarding style rather in the abstract, and

if fuller consideration might not be given to the diversity of purpose and material which has so much to do with the manner of expression; and such considerations might bring in a touch of the human interest which the author pretty rigorously excludes. But these queries are not a large subtraction from the general judgment given at the end of the first paragraph. Finally—and this is less of a query than a hope—since the great prose of the century does not here get much analysis or even extended comment, one may wish that Professor Williamson would write a companion volume in which he would apply his expert knowledge to critical examination of that rich body of writing.

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The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642. By LAWRENCE BABB. East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951. Pp. 197. \$3.50.

For approximately half a century critics of Elizabethan literature, and especially of the drama, have been studying what we briefly call the psychology of the period. Actually it was a combination of physiological and medical theory, with a sprinkling of ethics, philosophy, religion, and observation and interpretation of human conduct.

So many scholars have worked on the subject that further investigations apparently can do little more than correct misunderstandings, present divergent but equally authentic information, expand our knowledge where it is inadequate, and make original applications of the amassed data. Mr. Babb limits his exploration to melancholy. He analyzes it in some detail and uses the results of his analysis to explain certain passages from both dramatic and non-dramatic writings of the period from 1580 to 1642.

The opening chapter is a brief résumé of what we know about the physiological and psychological doctrines of the time. There follow two chapters on "The Scientific Theory of Melancholy." Then come chapters on malcontent types, melancholy in the drama, love-melancholy in science and in literature, and the dignity of melancholy. The book ends with bibliographies and index, and is annotated throughout.

The principal virtue of this study is that, more than most other analyses of Elizabethan psychology, it concentrates on one humour. To be sure, the sanguine, choleric, and phlegmatic humours and temperaments are included, but they come in by way of contrast or for the sake of completeness. Melancholy, as Mr. Babb's title indicates, was the Elizabethan malady. It was the one most written

about by Englishmen, scientists and laymen alike. We have no English discussions of other single humours comparable to Timothy Bright's *Treatise of Melancholie* or Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Even in works on humours in general, melancholy constantly occupied much more space than any other humour. Mr. Babb rightly asserts that the elaborations on this subject lead one almost to think that the term *melancholy* came to embrace practically all abnormalities. The result of this sixteenth- and seventeenth-century emphasis is that anyone writing of the humours nowadays is compelled to devote more of his attention to melancholia than to blood or bile or phlegm. For that reason Mr. Babb's concentration is not so much an innovation as might be supposed.

Nevertheless as the result of his reduction of the subject Mr. Babb has been able to investigate melancholy with commendable thoroughness. He has expanded the borders of his research somewhat by commenting upon selected passages from the non-dramatic writers of the period as well as from some dramatists other than Shakespeare, who generally are slighted in discussions of this kind.

The theories of the causes, nature, and effects of melancholy, and to a lesser degree of any other humour, are amazingly involved. The practical problem of how much to include, how much to omit, is a difficult one familiar to anyone who has ever attempted to explain the old psychological system. But Mr. Babb simplified further and omitted more than was advisable. His decision (page ix) "to omit controversy altogether"; his forthright pronouncement (page 2) that "It [the soul] is one and indivisible"; his division (page 8 and elsewhere) of the spirits into vital and animal, with no discussion anywhere of the natural spirits; and his surprisingly infrequent and hurried references to the greatest of all literary representations of melancholia, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*—these are illustrative disappointments which must have resulted from a determination to reduce the subject to its lowest terms, from a conviction that the book should be kept simple and brief.

But the subject with which the book deals is not simple and brief; it is complex and extensive. The psychological theories of the day were not uniform. Men's ideas differed. There were controversies then; to ignore them now, to state only one conception where two or three prevailed, is to give an inaccurate or partial account of what men thought. Note as an example the statement, already quoted, that the soul "is one and indivisible." Some writers thought so; others did not. On this point Burton said (*Anatomy*, Part I, Sec. I, Memb. 2, Subs. 5): "Some therefore make one *soul*, divided into three principal faculties: others, three distinct *souls*: . . . Paracelsus will have four souls, . . . The common division of the soul is into three principal faculties, *vegetal*, *sensitive*, and *rational*, . . ." It did not take Burton long to state the conflicting theories and to indicate which one was predominant.

Similarly with the classification of spirits. On page 8 Mr. Babb says that there were understood to be two types of spirit, vital and animal. He lists their functions. He does not mention natural spirits. On page 68 he says that some authorities recognized two classes of spirits, some three. He does not name the third type or enumerate its functions. Although a majority of writers probably believed, as Burton said they did, in one soul rather than in three, it is equally probable that a majority held to the doctrine of three types of spirit rather than two. Burton (*Anatomy*, Part I, Sec. I, Memb. 2, Subs. 2) is quite categorical in his assertion that there are three; he does not suggest that there is a noteworthy deviation from that idea. Burton is cited in these two instances not because he is irrefutable authority; he is cited because he makes it perfectly clear that differences of opinion did exist and that to ignore them is to give an incomplete account of the subject under discussion.

One would expect to find, in a special study of melancholia in English literature from 1580 to 1642, an attempt to dispel some of the fog of uncertainty and contradiction which characterizes interpretative criticism of *Hamlet*. This book makes no such attempt. We are told (page 109) that there "may be subtleties in Hamlet's personality and behavior" which the theories of melancholy will not explain. What these subtleties are, we are not informed. Nor are we informed what subtleties the theories will explain, except for the assertion (page 109) that they will explain his procrastination. And although that is a debated point (see, for example John W. Draper's *The "Hamlet" of Shakespeare's Audience*, pages 175-179), we are permitted to believe that there is no doubt about it. Again a bad consequence of the decision to avoid controversy. We are left to guess at Mr. Babb's interpretation of Hamlet's character on the basis of an incidental statement (page 107, footnote 20) to the effect that A. C. Bradley's interpretation is, in his opinion, "substantially right." But Bradley did not analyze Hamlet in terms of Elizabethan psychology. Just what aid is our painstaking recovery of Elizabethan psychology supposed to afford us in our interpretation of Elizabethan literature? At the cost of making this book longer, it would be much better to summarize the most significant studies of Hamlet's melancholy which have been made during the fifty years since Bradley wrote, and to bring those studies into line with the sixteenth-century theory of melancholy which Mr. Babb has conscientiously elucidated. Of course in the interpretation of the character of Hamlet there is confusion and contradiction—and controversy. But who, if not the specialist in Elizabethan melancholia, is to set us right?

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John Bunyan: The Man and His Works. By HENRI TALON.
Trans. Barbara Wall. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard
University Press, 1951. Pp. xii + 340. \$5.00.

This study of Bunyan, which appeared in a French edition in 1948, opens with a detailed account of Bunyan's spiritual development, the central portion of which consists of a close consideration of *Grace Abounding* and the extent of its autobiographical value. This is followed by a full literary analysis of the four major works (which also brings to light many "beauties" from the vast plain of Bunyan's conscientious pamphleteering), and the book concludes with sections bringing together Bunyan's religious, moral, and social ideas. M. Talon has not attempted a "definitive" book on Bunyan. First, he has made no attempt at external biography of the exhaustive nature of the studies by Brown and Vera Brittain. Second, this work does not provide the complete background necessary for an understanding of Bunyan as a seventeenth century thinker and artist. One still will find it fruitful to turn to Tindall's dissertation, a work which M. Talon praises and utilizes, but the findings of which he does not fully assimilate into his own work.

As the preface states, this study was written with the Continental audience in view. This, however, makes for some erratic judgments on what constitutes general knowledge when the book reaches English-speaking readers. A biographical sketch done in encyclopedia manner, and a superficial appendix on the development of English Puritanism have been retained. On the other hand, the author cites Luther as Bunyan's moral teacher with a single confusing paragraph of explanation, and discusses the extent of Bunyan's faith in the impending arrival of the "Fifth Monarchy" without explaining what social and political attitudes an entertainment of the hope frequently was associated with in the seventeenth century.

M. Talon has read Bunyan more closely than any previous critic. He is a Catholic interpreter at work on the most widely-known English protestant religious experience, and this combination provides new and subtle insights into Bunyan's religious psychology, and its relationship to the development of his art. For instance, there are important pages on the "Catholic" elements in Bunyan's religious temperament. But M. Talon's is no doctrinaire reinterpretation of the great protestant. If he finds Catholic elements in Bunyan's personality and practice, he is equally awake to the similarity between Bunyan's early approach to religion and that of the Quakers, whom he attacked. And, finally, he points out the development of Bunyan's later thought in the same broadly rationalizing and humanitarian direction which had been the path of the Anglican latitudinarians, another group with whom Bunyan had little conscious sympathy.

The most serious limitation of this study is the author's insufficient understanding of the historical development of English Puritanism. He does not note the part played by Presbyterianism in establishing a wide-spread independency, other than to call it "one of history's great ironies" (p. 313). If he had more thoroughly considered this aspect of Puritan intellectual history (it is noteworthy that the fullest study of the matter, William Haller's *Rise of Puritanism*, obtains no mention in M. Talon's bibliography) he might have seen the inevitability of this irony. And, more important for his subject, he would have realized the accuracy of Tindall's insistence upon the importance of the self-conscious social motivation of the "mechanick preachers," an insistence which M. Talon notes, praises, and minimizes. Also, this development within Puritanism's earlier stages would have explained a question which must have arisen in the minds of many Bunyan readers: i. e., why Bishop Fowler, a distinguished Presbyterian-turned-latitudinarian, should have been so bitterly concerned with the miscomprehending pamphlet of a relatively unknown "enthusiast" like Bunyan. Latitudinarian Anglicanism stood for an economy of dogma, but ardently advocated ritualism and an ecclesiastical hierarchy which would sternly suppress any disorderly dissent. This University-dominated movement represented, in a man like Fowler, a notable continuation of the hope for a governing ecclesiastical intelligentsia treasured in the dreams of the early Presbyterian leaders. And, as such, it naturally feared the same independent "enthusiasm" which had destroyed the earlier hope for a sane and pious theocracy governed by learned preachers.

Apart from this, there are minor corrections which might be noted for any future edition of this book. M. Talon treats Bunyan's judge, Sir John Kelynge, with amazed contempt (p. 7), yet most biographers have remembered that Kelynge himself had just served eighteen years' imprisonment for his loyalties. Further, Vera Brittain makes it clear (*Valiant Pilgrim* [New York, 1950], pp. 201-5) that Bunyan's replies to Kelynge's inquiries were technically tantamount to a "guilty" plea. At one point (p. 108, n. 59) M. Talon concludes that the posthumous works were "probably the last he [Bunyan] wrote," but in the appendices (p. 316) he attributes these same works to the period "shortly after 1666." The author incorrectly attributes a quotation concerning the latitudinarians to "a pamphlet by Samuel Parker . . . published in 1665" (p. 101, n. 29). The passage actually appears in S. P.'s *Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude-Men*, published in 1662, and generally attributed to Simon Patrick. Mechanical errors in this volume are at a minimum. On p. 166 we should read "Way" for "War," and Mrs. Wall wrote "published" on p. 316, in place of the French edition's correct "written."

In spite of its limitations as a study of the history of ideas, this

book is invaluable as an analysis of Bunyan's art. The examination of *Grace Abounding* was perhaps the most difficult, since it was necessary to disembarass us of the dictum of Edward Dowden (M. Talon chooses to father it upon John Livingston Lowes, who was only repeating what had become a critical cliché) that *Grace Abounding* was not a work of art, but an uncontrolled outpouring of visions and hallucinations from which the order of *The Pilgrim's Progress* was to emerge. This French reader has seen what English readers, blinded by the forest of "spiritual biographies," had never thoroughly understood: exactly how *Grace Abounding* became subtle and rich art, transcending its generic fellows among the didactic tracts of the times. The section on *The Pilgrim's Progress* not only includes a full summary with a running commentary on the symbolism, but fifty pages of incisive discussion of characters, the fusion of Biblical and romance imagery, and the general literary method of Bunyan's composition. *Mr. Badman* and *The Holy War* are examined in shorter scope in the section on Bunyan's artistry, M. Talon believing that the status of these works among English-speaking people "testifies to the generosity of the readers rather than to their critical faculty" (p. vii). Nonetheless, he manages to discover more details of artistic success in both works than had been made apparent in any previous study.

M. Talon's method of approaching his text is refreshing. There is no attempt to present dogmatically a generalized formula summing up Bunyan's craftsmanship (although this reader has found no better description of Bunyan's creative imagination than that on pp. 182-4 of M. Talon's book). The author prefers to present an impressive number of profound and satisfying insights into Bunyan's manipulation of prose rhythms, imagery, character, and sources. It is this same tendency to avoid centralization of emphasis, however, which mars the chapters on Bunyan's ideas (particularly that on "Bunyan's Religious Thought"). A method which produces suggestive riches in literary criticism may only confuse when carried over into the realm of ideas.

The translator and the publisher must both be congratulated on their work in making this best book on Bunyan available in the tinker's native language. The translation is a lucid handling of subtle prose. And this English edition has been enhanced by a series of sixteen plates which make available an easy chronological survey of the important illustrations of *The Pilgrim's Progress* from the "sleeping Bunyan" plate to the latest limited editions. It is a book to be warmly welcomed, and one hopes that it will inspire comparable translations of Castelain's *Jonson* and Legouis' *Andrew Marvell*.

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The Art of Wordsworth. By LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE. London [and New York]: Oxford University Press, 1952. Pp. viii + 157. \$2.50.

This is an illuminating work. It confirms the impression its author made upon those who were fortunate enough to know him: of honesty and modesty, of a poet and critic who thought for himself about matters of fundamental concern in the two fields to which he made distinguished contributions. It consists of the five Turnbull lectures delivered in 1935 at the Johns Hopkins University and a supplementary lecture on *Peter Bell*. The title indicates the subject, an important one since all too little attention has been paid to Wordsworth's *art*. Important too is the repeated emphasis on that "central" or "peculiar" or "inmost" "habit of experience" which is distinctive of any poet. By these phrases, which are not explained, is meant, not composition itself, but the poet's individual, unique way or habit of imaginatively transforming, interpreting, and presenting his experience. This habit is the "essential spirit of the man as poet," "that peculiarly individual relationship with his world, inner and outer, in which the spirit of the man most naturally and profoundly and completely lives," and in which "his poetry originates" (39, 38; cf. 40-5, 48-9, 63-3, 103-4, 125, 129-32, 143). In Wordsworth's case it is a "sense of kinship between the nature of the man and the nature of his world" together with a sense of "the omnipresence of divine spirit in all the workings of nature and of the mind" which accounts for this kinship (44, 124). As a consequence, Wordsworth has but two themes, which are united through the interpenetration of both nature and the mind of man by the universal mind. All of this is seen most clearly in *The Prelude*, the subject of which "is identical with its intention": "to reveal the formation and nature of . . . that unique relationship between his mind and his world in which he most deeply and vividly lived, and which constitutes his poetic personality" (40-1). Unfortunately Mr. Abercrombie did not add that this is another way of saying that the subject and intention of *The Prelude* is to reveal the development and nature of the imagination, which was the means of achieving that unique relationship between the mind and the world. Of the imagination, indeed, despite its importance to Wordsworth, little is said in these lectures.

In a number of places, including some of the passages quoted above, the meaning is none too clear. To what, for example, does "his world" refer? At times, in view of the stress Mr. Abercrombie rightly lays upon Wordsworth's belief that the individual mind is exquisitely fitted to the external world and the external world to the mind, the meaning seems to be "nature." Yet here, or else-

where it may be the ideal world of the poet's creation,¹ or the every day world in which we all live.

Another matter, related to this one, which is still more baffling is the explanation offered as to why *The Recluse* was never completed. With Wordsworth, we are told, "what demanded expression was the essence of poetic experience itself, not the imaginative form which, in most poets, poetic experience instinctively takes," such as "the figure and story of Satan, or of Faust, or of Prometheus" (65). A little earlier mention is made of "the *essence* of these ["Paradise, and groves Elysian, Fortunate Fields"]", their poetic force as imaginative symbols. The experience he had to express was in itself that essence, that poetic force; and only as itself could he express it" (64-5). How "the essence of poetic experience" can be expressed except by examples of the imaginative transformation and interpretation of the poet's own experience such as are found in *The Prelude* is not made clear, and of such examples Wordsworth had apparently already given about all he had to offer. Furthermore there is little of this sort of thing in *The Excursion*, which was to form a part of *The Recluse*, and little suggestion of it in the "views of Man, Nature, and Society . . . meditations in the Author's own person" to which, the poet declared, much of the projected work was to have been devoted.

Mr. Abercrombie's ability to bring freshness and illumination to a well-worn theme is seen in his lecture on diction. The *Lyrical Ballads* preface, he remarks, "was typically the theory of hot-headed rebellious youth, the defiant unhesitating rationalization of confident instinct and headstrong opinion" (79). Yet it enabled Wordsworth to condemn the diction of false poetry and, although it landed him in impossible situations (since it also condemned much of his own verse as well as passages in Shakespeare and Milton that he admired), he stuck to it because for a time (a qualification not mentioned by Mr. Abercrombie) it "genuinely, though in some ways very imperfectly, expressed an absolute necessity of his poetic nature" (85). This necessity was for "simple and unelaborated expressions," and it was in order to find a suitable occasion for using these that he turned to rustic life. So our author. But there were other reasons for turning to humble life: it seemed to Wordsworth more real, honest, universal, and enduring, hence more significant; furthermore his rebellion against the conventional poetry of the day was not simply or primarily against its diction but quite as much against its subject matter, incidents, prosody, style, and purposes. Accordingly Mr. Abercrombie's contention that Wordsworth wrote of rustic life chiefly

¹ Cf. *Prelude*, III, 144-5:

I had a world about me—'twas my own;
I made it, for it only lived to me.

because it enabled him to use "simple and unelaborated expressions" which "his genius . . . required" cannot be accepted. His subject was one reason for his style and his style was one reason for his subject.

The supplementary lecture presents a novel and convincing interpretation of *Peter Bell*. This baffling product of the poet's great days is characterized as "by far the most remarkable example of Wordsworth's faculty of psychological imagination, and its structural power" as well as "in some respects the crowning achievement of [his rebel] tendencies in style and matter . . . his flouting of received notions of the 'poetic'" (74, 134-6). His purpose was to show how, largely by nature which Peter had set himself against, "a secure equilibrium of character is disturbed, destroyed, and after an agony of dissolution settles again into a new and strangely difficult equilibrium. The psychological *process* is the thing" (148) not any moral to be drawn from the reformation of a sinner. Here, as in the admirable analysis of *The Borderers*, we are reminded of the "very remarkable degree" in which its author was endowed with the faculty of psychological imagination. "Indeed," Mr. Abercrombie remarks, "it may be said that in Wordsworth psychology took the place and performed the function of mythology" (67-8). The book abounds in penetrating observations, and if some of the ideas advanced are either not made clear or not made convincing this may be the reason why the author delayed publication.

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Jane Austen. Irony as Defense and Discovery. By MARVIN MUDRICK. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1952. Pp. 267. \$5.00.

Mr. Mudrick's general intent is to liberate Jane Austen from the critical tradition that has treated her as "the gentle-hearted chronicler of Regency order," and to divulge the irony by means of which she lashed out in her novels at the same kind of society that has since relished her gentle-heartedness. As he sees her artistic development, she was consistently regulated by a need of distance from her subject so as not to commit herself. She therefore adopted irony or convention for her point of view in order to avoid personal involvement, but it was irony that served as her major instrument for exploring and presenting life. He admits that both positions allowed her to keep her distance, but he has erected irony into an esthetic virtue and finds the resort to convention and, occasionally, to evaluation, to be the source of her

failures. Once the critic has committed himself to this thesis, the direction in which he is driven is inevitable: he must analyse the novels in a search for irony; when he can, supposedly, absorb an entire novel into a system of irony, he approves (e. g., *Emma*); when he finds this pattern leaves a moralistic residue—moralizing being commitment—he must qualify his approval (e. g., *Pride and Prejudice*); when convention, not irony, determines the author's point of view, he must condemn (*Mansfield Park*). But everywhere the game to be tracked down is irony, which consists in "the discrimination between impulse and pretension, between being and seeming, between . . . man as he is and man as he aspires to be," and which makes these discriminations without drawing conclusions.

Despite an unaccountable and annoying irritability, Mudrick writes remarkably well, so well that the reader is inclined to let go his hold on critical premises and be led away from the novels as he has known them. But it is precisely in the matter of critical premises that this book calls for examination. What is disturbing is not that the critic has pointed to the large amount of irony in the novels and thereby has underscored what is usually neglected. In noticing Jane Austen's usually ironic perspective he is undoubtedly sound. What are disturbing are the ways he goes about his task, the critical assumptions he makes, and the implications that follow.

To concentrate upon the more important matters, I shall put aside Mudrick's arguing from the nature of the novelist to the nature of the novels, and his assumption of economic and social values that may be pertinent today but that would be astonishing to Jane Austen. As he uses the term "irony" it has to do with the point of view from which the narrator chooses to present materials, and with the relationship between materials statically considered. It is, therefore, a policy, but not a controlling design; and it can be the major instrument for analysing only those works contingent mainly upon policy. If irony is the pertinent policy, it could unfold, let us say, a character sketch or a familiar essay, but not a novel. Since irony consists in discriminations, it must deal with oppositions; but these oppositions may reside anywhere: in a statement, in the presentation of a character, in the relationship of characters, in the ordering of a plot, in the relationship of character and event. Among these Mudrick makes no distinctions: irony is where one finds it, and it is *the* artistic control. Genre has no meaning. But if irony is only a policy for proceeding, it does not give to a work its shape, for the policy may be pursued indefinitely. The shape of a novel derives from its plot, and therefore it is in plot that the novel's statement resides.

The six major novels of Jane Austen are, in the main, plotted narratives that pivot around a change in the attitudes of the

protagonists. And yet Mudrick almost never considers plot development. In attempting to read a novel in terms of irony, he is trying to understand a design by examining its underside, and, moreover, is bringing to the novels an assumption by which he will test them, instead of allowing their inherent forms to dictate what is pertinent. Something is obviously wrong when we are told that "*Emma* can be read as the story of a spoiled rich girl who is corrected by defeat and love, and who lives happily ever after," but that "it has more to give." This something more is the unpleasant treatment of *Emma* and the society she represents, and the irony arises from the clash between this underlying unpleasantness and the charm of the main narrative. Now, a critical reading cannot be a matter of either-or. At the very least, it must be this-and-that, and both at the same time. But the critic has been tracking down ironies with eminent success: all the while that *Emma* is being coddled into a mating with Mr. Knightley, Jane Austen has been using *Emma* to strike out at her desire to manage others, her social snobbery, and her preference for submissive women. "*Emma* plays God because she cannot commit herself humanly." All this is very well, but what to do about the plot? It would be difficult to deny that the novel is devoted to readjusting *Emma* until she will commit herself humanly so that the reader may be willing that she be joined with Mr. Knightley. The design of the novel, in other words, is its plot; yet this is the very point that Mudrick ignores. His assumption allows him to read plot or to read the characterization of *Emma*, and to see the two in ironic contrast with each other. Having inverted the relationship between policy and design, he is forced to resort to sleight of hand. If one reads the plot and sees the "happy" resolution, he has had a "limited vision," but not "a false one; for Jane Austen does succeed in her primary levels in achieving . . . her most perfect love comedy." This, Mudrick describes as the "deceptiveness of surface." Does this mean that the plot is an empty tub to engage us harmlessly while Miss Austen strikes out with the destructive aspect of her irony? or that the happy plot merely removes the moralistic edge from the attack? Obviously what disturbs the critic is that, having postulated irony as the total control over the novel, he cannot fit the plot into his assumption except as a half—and the less significant half—of an ironic opposition. Indeed, he tries another ruse: the happy ending does not arise out of character, situation, and events, since the real intent is to reveal all these in their unpleasant aspects; it is the social milieu of the novel that permits *Emma's* charm to conquer, despite her errors and cruelty. Hence, even the happy ending is ironic, according to this interpretation. If we recall that what is being analysed is a novel, I do not see that this can mean anything but that the conclusion is inorganic, the plot is stuck together with the mucilage of irony, and the novel, as novel, is a

failure. Because he has chosen irony as the controlling design of the novel, Mudrick must have dichotomies, and the plot therefore becomes only the deceptive half of the dichotomy. His complaint is against those who find in Austen's novels that "surface must tell all"; but he is therefore inclined to make the "surface" a triviality. D. W. Harding, to whom he traces the genealogy of his thesis, did not claim so much. His strongly ironic reading of the novels, Harding admitted, "is deliberately lop-sided." He recognized, that is, that irony is a mode of the design, not the design itself; an aspect that may give the fillip that snuggles the plot firmly into place, but not a substitute for plot. *Emma* is "about" the gradual education of a young lady of the landed gentry who, through a series of misadventures, learns her proper marital and social duties and the degree of her necessary personal involvement in them. This is the controlling design of the novel; irony is the policy for weaving it.

The treatment of *Pride and Prejudice* is an even more telling example of the consequences of ignoring plot as the controlling structure. Searching for the oppositions necessary for irony, Mudrick must ignore the becoming-ness of the novel, its plot development. In terms of this evolution, the novel has to do with the gradual revision of the attitudes of Elizabeth and Darcy. This is what takes place in the novel, and everything else is an integral part of the sequentiality by which this revision is traced. Mudrick, however, ignores all this in his quest for ironic oppositions, and that there is something amiss in his premises is suggested by the fact that his chapter breaks up the novel into a series of static character sketches. It is as though each character were a separate entity and not an operative part of a development. The result is a serious distortion and misinterpretation of the novel. We are told, for example, that Elizabeth reflects the author's ironic vision and shares her desire to laugh at follies. But in terms of the plot the purpose of the novel is to reveal that Elizabeth must learn what is and what is not folly. Her ironic view causes her to misunderstand Darcy, and she must eventually learn the significance of his social status and duties. The identity of heroine and author, we are given to understand, also lies in the fact that Elizabeth's judgments are primarily psychological, not moral. But the whole drift of the novel is to show how seriously mistaken first impressions may be. Only when Elizabeth can make a moral evaluation of Darcy's actions can the novel find its resolution. In this sense the novel is anti-ironic. Only some of the minor characters are consistently treated ironically—Collins, Mrs. Bennet, Lady Catherine, for example; and the general intent of the novel is to make discriminations between subjects that should and those that should not be viewed ironically, but morally. Because the critic must have his ironies, Darcy must be a moral value hidden behind a façade

of pride. But what the sequentiality of the novel traces out is that Elizabeth must learn there is no difference between pretense and reality here: Darcy's pride is in reality his sense of his social duties, which Elizabeth must come to recognize and value. Because of the same distortion, Mudrick can find no irony in Darcy's final generosity to the Bennets and must attribute it to his love of Elizabeth; by his act, which derives from convention, not irony, Darcy "comes very close to forfeiting even the functional plausibility that Elizabeth's interest lends him." But what the plot explicitly tells, if one is willing to follow the sequence, is that Darcy spends his pounds because it is his duty in the social, economic, and moral order to do so: Wickham is Darcy's social responsibility because of the social relation of the two, and Darcy must make reparations for his failure to control Wickham's destructive force and to keep a stable social order. There is no need to point out other misinterpretations, such as those of Charlotte, Jane, and Bingley. The symptom of what is wrong in Mudrick's method becomes obvious when he tells us what "should" have been the proper irony in the presentation of Lydia, what "should" have been the ironic treatment of Wickham's seductions, what Elizabeth "should" have known about Lydia. What we have been offered is not simply a fresh interpretation, but one considerably different from that conveyed by Jane Austen's novels.

EARL R. WASSERMAN

The Dream of Learning: An Essay on The Advancement of Learning, Hamlet, and King Lear. By D. G. JAMES. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1951. Pp. viii & 127.

This little book (originally a series of four lectures given at Oxford in 1950) is extraordinarily difficult to review. One may predict with confidence that it will receive much angry treatment. The author may have intended to forestall criticism by the candour with which he confesses in advance to certain anticipated charges. He is, for example, forthright in refusing to be bound by the historical method. Many people, willing enough to forgive him that, will complain that he seems to be equally determined not to be helped by it; they may add that he displays little inclination to be bound by the text, either. Others, who will approve his acknowledgment of the risks in "appearing" to lift Hamlet out of the play, are unlikely to think that he has quite avoided these risks when they find that his discussion of both play and character is largely an analysis of the "To be" soliloquy (nor will they be

much reassured by the nature of the analysis). In short, this book will be thought a maverick.

It is a maverick; but a summary of its argument will show that, like the range variety, it is full of interest. It purports to be a comparison between the relative contributions to modern civilization of Bacon and Shakespeare (the decision may be safely anticipated: the author was, when he gave these lectures, Professor of English at Bristol); and the starting-point is the following estimate of their age: "there was no clear and secure intellectual tradition to sustain them and in which they might compose (p. 3)." Bacon's achievement was that he showed men how to escape from the frustration of such a condition. Ultimate truth is beyond the reach of human reason; it must therefore be left to the testimony of faith; reason's role is the mastery of physical nature. The knowledge we have gained under Bacon's banner has turned into immense power. Did Shakespeare also provide a knowledge which is power, or was Bacon right when he said that poetry is only "a dream of learning?"

The answer has two phases. In *Hamlet* Shakespeare is, like Bacon, prophetic of the modern world; but what he foresees is "uncertainty, ignorance, failure, and defeat (36)." Hamlet's problem is whether it is nobler to suffer patiently or to take arms against the wicked (I am giving Mr. James's interpretation of III. i. 56 ff.); but this ethical question cannot be answered until one has answered the metaphysical and religious question—is there a God and an afterlife? Hamlet does not know, and his is therefore a tragedy not of excessive but of defeated thought. There is no mystery about his delay. Since he has a sensitive conscience but no clear principles, how can he choose between the conflicting promptings of blood and passion on the one hand and reason and judgment on the other?

In *King Lear* Shakespeare looks again, this time directly, at the problem which had defeated Hamlet; and to deal with it he uses a method which is almost, but not quite, that of allegory: there is a conceptual scheme underlying and directing the story, but it never becomes quite explicit, never breaks out from the situation—it remains, that's to say, symbolism. The chief characters are really in the Morality tradition: they are of pure and unmitigated evil or of surpassing spiritual beauty. Lear is haunted by a sense that the source of his daughters' evil is in himself. He therefore wishes to forbear, wishes for patience; and this wish is in conflict with the violent impulses of the rash man, the man of anger, judgment, curses. This is just the issue which confronted Hamlet; only here it is not avoided. At first it overthrows Lear's mind. But Lear is the father of Cordelia as well as of Goneril and Regan, and in the end he is transformed; himself in a measure, Cordelia and Edgar completely, show whether it is better to suffer

or to take arms. The play is designed to exhibit evil possessed of the initiative and virtue helpless to intervene but remaining suffering love. Evil drives on to its own destruction; good is also destroyed; but in being figures of "patient merit" Cordelia and Edgar transcend the problems of life that have defeated Hamlet, achieve a sense of life in which such problems do not occur. Men must endure; ripeness is all. In *King Lear* Shakespeare looked at the world and saw in it evil, from which he promised us no escape; "but he also saw a certain power in human nature to overcome the world and to make the world fade in our imaginations and leave not a rack behind (126)"; and this perception is his bequest to us, greater than Bacon's.

The space allotted me is insufficient to test Mr. James's argument. Some questions may be asked instead. Was the condition of renaissance England as Mr. James represents it? Is it true that renaissance drama shows nothing approaching a religious or Christian ethos? What standard of values underlies Mr. James's irritation that Hamlet should "get away with it" so "lightly" (75)? Does Hamlet really display a fear of death? When is allegory not allegory? Is it true that Iago's conduct (Mr. James's test case) is motiveless? Is it good argument to contend, without demonstration, that Cordelia and Edgar are types of spiritual perfection whose essential role is helpless suffering, and hence that when Shakespeare makes them lead armies and fight battles he is wresting apart "the soul of the play and the body of the plot (112)?" How would the perception of life achieved by Cordelia and Edgar have enabled them to deal with Hamlet's actual problem (as distinct from what Mr. James sees as its philosophical essence)?

The list of questions could be considerably extended, but the reader will before this have recognized that I distrust Mr. James's argument. It should therefore be made clear that few people will read this book (especially the section on *Hamlet*) without experiencing—and that not infrequently—the lift of discovery that accompanies fresh insight.

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A Cycle of Cathay: the Chinese vogue in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By WILLIAM W. APPLETON. New York: Columbia University Press, 1951. Pp. xii + 182. \$3.00.

This is a small book on a large subject. Professor Appleton briefly relates the story of the European discovery of China by merchant and missionary, and then goes on to discuss the reactions of Western men of letters to the accounts of Chinese civilization

which subsequently appeared. What solutions ethnologists and philologists found for the problem of fitting the Chinese into the scriptural concept of world history is the topic of one chapter; how the political and moral philosophers idealized the system of Confucius is the subject of another. Chinese themes and motifs on the English stage are discussed, and the literary convention of the Chinese observer of European affairs, which found its most brilliant exemplification in Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*, receives its due meed of attention. The longest and most important chapter is devoted to English *chinoiserie*—in household decoration, in garden structures, and in *le jardin anglo-chinois*. The waning of Chinese influences toward the end of the century is then traced, and the book concludes with an account of the failure of Macartney's embassy in 1792, which put an end for more than a generation to any hopes of establishing closer relations between England and China.

Students of the history of ideas and of taste must, by the very nature of their interest, be expert in a number of fields. The literary influence of China in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was, on the whole, of comparatively minor importance; in some of the other arts the Chinese influence was far greater. Professor Appleton writes well; his tone is detached, and his touch is light; but his very deftness seems to cover a lack of *expertise* on non-literary topics, and the tone of uniform detachment becomes a substitute for the need to pass judgments and distinguish between what is of permanent significance and what is not. It is doubtful if the art of the potter has ever achieved such miracles of delicacy and refinement as in eighteenth century China, and the floral wallpapers that came to Europe during the same period have never been surpassed in beauty. The mania for acquiring such decorations was not without excuse. It is easy, too, to laugh at the Chinese designs of the brothers Halfpenny or of Chippendale—for some of them *are* ridiculous—yet one has only to see an eighteenth century room decorated in the Chinese Chippendale manner to perceive an exquisite grace and a lightness of fancy unlike that of any other variety of rococo art. These things are important in the history of cultures, but one looks in vain for any awareness of such values in Professor Appleton's book. Nor does he even hint at the very existence of the considerable vogue for *chinoiserie* in Colonial America, or at its growth during the early Federal period when the infant republic was capturing its share of the China trade, to say nothing of the fact that some of Chippendale's Chinese designs are still being imitated in Grand Rapids. But these last, it may well be maintained, are topics for a separate book.

What is really needed in the present state of the study of Anglo-Chinese relations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is

not so much a survey like the present volume as a whole series of monographs on special topics. We need to know more about the kinds and quantities of goods imported from China, and how changes in taste affected the choice of imports. We need also to know, with more precision than is yet possible, when and to what extent the Chinese first adapted their own and then copied European designs in the various types of their export wares. The records of the East India Company, which still have a rich harvest to yield, need to be thoroughly combed, and their evidence correlated with objects, such as the fragments from the Table Bay wrecks, that can be dated precisely. Most of these tasks, it is true, are not for literary students to perform, but they are nonetheless urgently necessary.

An example of the type of monograph suggested (which, unhappily, appeared too recently for Professor Appleton to see) can be found in Osvald Sirén's *China and the Gardens of Europe in the Eighteenth Century*. By its scope and thoroughness (even though it covers less than half of Europe), by its original research and discovery of new facts, it casts much new light on its subject, and its series of over two hundred plates succeeds in capturing, just in time, what survives of an art that is unlikely ever to be revived. Only when half a dozen similar studies are available will a just survey be possible. In the meanwhile, Professor Appleton's book must serve, for those who need introductions, as an introduction to its subject, and those who are interested will at least find the bibliography to be extracted from his footnotes of the greatest value as a guide to further exploration.

R. C. BALD

University of Chicago

Melville's Quarrel with God. By LAWRENCE THOMPSON. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1952. Pp. 475. \$6.00.

Mr. Thompson has written a belligerent study of considerable length to demonstrate that the current image of Melville and his works is false, careless, and timid. Melville, he argues, was not a troubled Christian moving in and out of his Calvinistic heritage. Nor was he merely a confirmed sceptic. By the time he wrote *White-Jacket*, the thesis runs, Melville was an insistent God-hater who "spent his life not merely in sneering at the gullibility of human beings who disagreed with him but also in sneering at God, accusing God, upbraiding God, blaming God, and (as he thought) quarreling with God." Working from the assumptions that a writer's moral idiom controls his artistic idiom, and that it is possi-

ble to define precisely a writer's intent, Mr. Thompson calls for a fundamentally new reading of the works based on the theological allegories which he finds in all of them. Curiously enough, the short stories are not even mentioned.

Moby-Dick, for instance, is an attack on God's "infinite malice" for putting the world together wrong. Specifically, Father Mapple's sermon is "a sarcastic and sneering burlesque of Christian doctrine." The hymn to spiritual democracy (Chapter xxvi) is "caustically sarcastic." In "A Squeeze of the Hand" "a particular aspect of Christian doctrine is being ridiculed." "The Try-Works" is "an anti-Christian sermon." Ishmael, "a self-acknowledged coward, fugitive, outcast, escapist" (compared to the "brave and heroic" Ahab), is saved in a physical sense only.

There is no space here to examine the content of Mr. Thompson's interpretations, but his methods for getting such readings should be scrutinized. First he projects from Melville's reading in the sceptics and heretics (Bayle, Montaigne, the Satan School of the romantics, Schopenhauer) a positive set of mind: heresy was not an aspect of Melville's thought but the controlling force. Everything follows from this premise and from Mr. Thompson's personal response to the works in general. He posits a narrow vision but complex devices for expressing it. "Triple talk" is Melville's central method, "the principle of (1) telling a story (2) from an ostensibly Christian viewpoint, while (3) projecting a blasphemous anti-Christian allegorical meaning." The critical method thus becomes the examination of passage after passage from the work at hand to find when Melville agrees with his fictional narrator and when he doesn't. The method even at its best is a delicate one, and at its worst encourages critical irresponsibility. Mr. Thompson's almost savage wielding of his weapon after a while numbs the reader into insensibility. All the crucial passages inevitably turn out to have a third level of meaning that is "covert" or "sinister" or "sarcastic" or "sneering." Melville is "hoodwinking" the biased Christian reader by making his "stupid narrator" say one thing when he (Melville) means another. The proof? Either reference back to the premise that Melville *was* violently heretical or a specious appeal to what is called "the larger context" (e.g., pp. 162, 163, 174, 192, 210, 340, 364, 368, and others). When the text reads "Ahab's quenchless feud seemed mine" the method allows: "That word 'seemed' is protective; but the larger context translates it to 'was'." The method is ultimately circular, and since Mr. Thompson is often more interested in an argued thesis than in the sensitive reading of a given passage for whatever it may contain (as in the flagrant misreading of "wile and guile" in "Camoens," p. 349) the book as a whole is a failure.

The study has its uses, however. Many of the specific insights are provocative and the reading of *Billy Budd*, in spite of excesses

of tone, seriously (and I think successfully) challenges the "testament of acceptance" thesis. Melville scholars will need to consult the book for its highly provocative use of analogues and contrasting passages from several writers, especially Carlyle, Milton, and the Bible, and will be grateful for the excellent topical-critical index at the end. But for the general student of literature this attractively titled and very handsomely designed book is a mantrap. He will find here a harshly written, thesis-ridden, argument which on the whole is graceless and obsessive. Melville's quarrel with authority was a complex affair, and to strip his profoundly symbolic writings down to theological allegories which ignore that Melville was also son to his father, seaman under many captains, and citizen in a democracy that hated kings and tyrants, is indeed reductive.

WALTER E. BEZANSON

Rutgers University

The Primary Language of Poetry in the 1640's. By JOSEPHINE MILES. Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1948. Pp. 1 + 160.

The Primary Language of Poetry in the 1740's and 1840's. By JOSEPHINE MILES. Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1950. Pp. 161 + 382.

The Primary Language of Poetry in the 1940's. By JOSEPHINE MILES. Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1951. Pp. 383 + 542.

It is necessary to emphasize the limitations Prof. Miles has set to her study. She has searched for likeness, not difference, and for likeness primarily by time rather than by type or individuals. Within the bounds only of such likeness does she offer her descriptive generalizations as to "poetry's sorts of formal selection" and the continuities of primary poetic language.

Her method is to count adjectives, nouns, and verbs in the verse of twenty "provisionally" representatives poets in each decade, and thus to determine the major references of the period and to mark the substantival and predicative emphases of its poets. She then shows, by describing radically different poems, how these data relate to the sound and sentence structure of poetic language, and suggests degrees of kinship among poets according to their similarities in reference, proportioning, and characteristic structures. The primary poetic language of a decade is then related to prose practice and theory, to reveal similarities in materials and attitudes.

A final section gives, "in the light and shadow of some critical views, some descriptive generalizations."

The method is adequate to the limited purpose. And one feels that Prof. Miles has controlled the method more firmly to that purpose since publication and criticism of her first volume; she seemed, in her study of the 1640's, to have wished that her method might do more. Whereas there she had generalized from Donne's "Songs and Sonets," in the later volumes she reduces strain on her concept of the forties, admitting, e. g., only the Pope of *Dunciad* (B version), the Eliot of *Quartets*, along with the "retrospective shows" of certain collected works, according to her belief that "the force of survival and acceptance is itself characteristic" of a decade. And she has been more cautious in suggesting definitive conclusions—really beyond the reach of her method—about the distinguishing marks of a poetic school or a poet's style. Thus it seems to me unnecessary to complain that Prof. Miles does not detail fully variations in *aspect* of reference for a given word from poet to poet or century to century. She does discuss such variations where they are pertinent to description of major emphases. And she repeatedly warns against the assumption that these emphases define completely the peculiarities of poets, types of poetry, or any single poem. The word counts remain valid indices of major reference within a given period and of at least one line of continuity between periods. So, too, with the tables of proportion. In each table poets are listed in order of adjectival frequency, since an increase in the number of adjectives usually means also an increase in number of nouns, hence a relatively substantival rather than predicative texture. But Prof. Miles is quite careful to distinguish exceptions, e. g., Ezra Pound, who uses relatively few adjectives, but who, since he uses many nouns and very few verbs, is not grouped with the predicative poets of his time.

Prof. Miles amply demonstrates that "art uses quantity as well as quality, to make the effect it chooses." But one may regret the restrictions that the purpose and method place upon a critic of Prof. Miles' sensitivity and erudition. For although these studies have value in confirming some of the perceptions of others and may moreover prove suggestive even to those who would describe and evaluate the distinctive modes of poets and poems, Prof. Miles herself has declined the gambit of criticism in the interest of quantitative description. The most lucid and stimulating portions of her books describe the characteristic structures of "predicative" poets and the pressures of quantity upon certain whole poems; and these portions really have little to do with the word counts, but depend greatly upon Prof. Miles' sensitivity and experience as a reader of poetry.

It would be possible wholly to approve these studies on grounds that they suit means to ends. But one wishes that Prof. Miles had

concerned herself less with the meanings and overtones of words in relative abstraction and more with the ways in which their suggestions interpenetrate each other within the special harmony of a poet's creation.

EDWARD CLEVELAND

University of Wisconsin

Introduction to the History of Science. By GEORGE SARTON. Vol. I: *From Homer to Omar Khayyam.* Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1927; reprinted 1945 and 1950. Pp. xi + 839. Vol. II: *From Rabbi Ben Ezra to Roger Bacon.* Two parts. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1931; reprinted 1950. Pp. xxxv + 1251. Vol. III: *Science and Learning in the Fourteenth Century.* Two parts. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1947 (Part I) and 1948 (Part II). Pp. xxxv + 2155. \$45.00 for all 3 volumes.

Historians of science have long been familiar with Dr. Sarton's great work; moreover, many students of literature, when their research has led them to investigate the impingement of science upon literature, have discovered the value of its succinct summaries of the scientific activities characteristic of the various ages in the world's history, and of its bibliographical lists of the major scholarly studies of each notable writer and of each historical period.

Dr. Sarton's definition of science is not the narrow concept of the term that is regrettably the most common one today; instead, he adheres to the ancient historical denotation of the term, by which "science" includes all systematically organized knowledge. In short, one can say without serious exaggeration that, like Francis Bacon—but with greater humility and better understanding of the complexity of the task—he has sought to take all knowledge to be his province. In the firm conviction that the physical and biological sciences can not be properly understood when divorced from their cultural background, Dr. Sarton, having for the sake of convenience divided his survey into units of half-centuries, supplies for each half-century an introduction comprising sections on such subjects as (1) the religious background, (2) education, (3) the philosophical and cultural background, (4) historiography, (5) law and sociology, and (6) philology, as well as sections on the various natural sciences and on medicine. Therefore, in view of the vast scope of his major scholarly endeavor, Dr. Sarton's crowning of his life's work by the successful completion and publication of Volume III, carrying his account and bibliographical survey down to the year 1400, and the reprinting of Volume I and II—already long out of print—deserves special notice in a journal devoted primarily to literary history and to philology.

The constancy with which the author emphasizes the relation that the history of science bears to other activities of the human spirit is illustrated by the titles he assigns to the books and chapters into which he divides his immense work; for example, "The Time of Plato (first half of fourth century B. C.)," "The Time of Virgil (second half of first century B. C.)," "The Time of Omar Khayyam (second half of eleventh century)," and, finally, "The Age of Chaucer" (the second half of the fourteenth century)—the title given to Part II of Volume III. In the chapter on the philosophical and cultural background of that age there are sections on Langland, Walter Hilton, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Gower, and Chaucer himself.

The student of English Literature will find that the specialized reference books and bibliographies of his own discipline provide him with more comprehensive guides to the available material on these authors, but from no single book can he obtain so much guidance in ascertaining the principal works discussing the activities of the period in the natural sciences and in many other fields of learning.

Sarton's *Introduction to the History of Science* has firmly established itself as the indispensable work of reference for all scholars who may come to be concerned with the relations of science and literature, and should therefore be fully known to all students of ancient and modern languages and literatures.

FRANCIS R. JOHNSON

Stanford University

JOHN MILTON'S *An Apology*. Edited by MILFORD C. JOCHUMS.
Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1950. Pp. xii + 255.

Mr. Jochums' annotated edition of *An Apology against a Pamphlet* advances a distinguished series of separately treated prose works of Milton (on the American scene) begun at Yale under the leadership of Albert A. Cook, continued at Western Reserve and Ohio State under the direction of James Holly Hanford and William R. Parker, and now at Illinois under the guidance of Harris Fletcher. Mr. Jochums' work takes a solid and worthy place beside J. W. Hales' edition of *Areopagitica* (Oxford, 1872), William T. Allison's edition of *The Tenure* (Yale, 1911), Evert M. Clark's *The Readie & Easie Way* (Yale, 1915), Will T. Hale's *Of Reformation* (Yale, 1916), and Oliver Ainsworth's *Of Education* (Yale, 1930). No scholarly work is more baffling or rewarding than to edit Milton's prose. Yet one would have to be as full and rich as Milton himself to do him justice. Of the editors thus far in the series (leaving aside for the moment such collections as the Columbia edition and the Hughes, *Selected Prose*), Will T. Hale faced the most baffling

problems and rewarded us with the most creative annotations and introduction of the series. Mr. Jochums' volume, though it falls far short of the illumination found in Hale, is a work of sound, accurate scholarship comparable to that of Allison, Clark, and Ainsworth.

Mr. Jochums' first aim has been to produce an impeccable text, first, by reproducing *An Apology* in facsimile, second, by providing a multitude of textual notes (some of them highly inconsequential), and third by supplying expert bibliographical descriptions and comparisons of the various copies collated. In this purpose Mr. Jochums is completely successful. His textual preface is a model of precision and accuracy. Though the text of *An Apology* offers no serious problems, one has the impression that no future editor will wish to expand the descriptions of the minute variations found by Mr. Jochums in the six copies collated in duplicating the text.

Mr. Jochums' second aim has been to provide copious annotations and commentary, almost twice the length of the text itself. These notes are illuminating, well organized, rich in quotations especially from Joseph Hall, whose voluminous works in contemporary editions Jochums has studied with great care. Some of the notes most helpful to Milton scholars are those explaining Milton's praise of utopias and his ridicule of Hall's *Mundus Alter et Idem*; London prisons, the Clink and the Gate-House; "*Foxian Confessors*" (though the exact phrase still remains untraced); Milton's play upon the words "satyr" and "satire"; suppression of the English Bible. All notes within the framework of the Hall-Milton exchange Jochums handles with fullness and exactness. Least satisfactory are the background and parallel-idea notes requiring a wide reading of pamphlet literature of the years 1640-41 (such as the oath *ex-officio*); those dealing with Milton's sources (the editions named by Hanford in "The Chronology" have been only scatteringly referred to, and not examined); and the notes on the famous autobiographical passage (pp. 15-17 of the pamphlet).

No editor, however, can be equally well integrated in the pamphlet literature, in Milton's reading of such English histories as Stow, Speed, and Hollinshed, the manifold complexities of source editions, and at the same time in the documents of the Hall-Milton Smectymnian controversy. Any one of these documents leads an editor to a study of the church fathers, the Catholic Church since Constantine, the councils, Elizabethan parallels of protest, Renaissance rhetoric and logic. Each of these is a world in itself, in which Milton trod as easily as any of his great contemporaries. Mr. Jochums has chosen wisely, therefore, to limit his study to the immediate ramifications of the document at hand. Within this framework he has worked with sound scholarly perspective and brought up as his yield a book of solid and substantial value.

DON M. WOLFE

Brooklyn College

The Tudor Books of Private Devotion. By HELEN C. WHITE.
Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1951.
Pp. 284.

The effect of the great breach in the alignment of the English church in the sixteenth century made itself evident in the literature of private devotion more slowly and less decisively than in the literature of the pulpit and that of confession and casuistry derived from pulpit edification. However moving the experience of the Word might be, when people prayed at home by themselves, they prayed naturally enough in the way that for generations they had been brought up to pray. They still kept, after the separation from Rome, to the traditional forms which went back through the great medieval monastic orders to St. Augustine and St. Paul. That traditional selection of psalms known as the Psalter continued to serve. The collection of traditional prayers, varying in content but revolving about the Hours of the Blessed Virgin and the Fifteen Oes, were not soon or completely cast aside. On the contrary the burgeoning book trade found its own interest in putting these things into print, without compunction if not with devotion. Gradually but decisively, however, the new alignment of the church, with its shift of emphasis from liturgy to preaching, with the intensification of spiritual concern and the sense of impending crisis provoked by preaching, had its effect even on this perhaps the most traditional and customary form of religious expression. English displaced Latin as the language of personal devotion. The Marian elements in the primer became attenuated and finally disappeared. The Primer gave way more and more to the Psalter, and the Psalter grew more inclusive. The Bible tended more and more to become the prime book of devotion for everyone. And if we look beyond the limits of Miss White's present work but still in the same line of development, we are bound to see the on-coming profusion of personal devotional and confessional literature which came to flower in such things as *The Saint's Everlasting Rest*, *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*, and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. What Miss White has done, with painstaking attention to detail, with loving sympathy for her subject, and with the kind of understanding which comes only from abundant knowledge, has been to show how the new piety and the new literature still had its roots in the common Christian past.

WILLIAM HALLER

Folger Shakespeare Library

The Legend of Romeo and Juliet. By OLIN H. MOORE. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State Univ. Studies, No. 13, 1950. Pp. ix + 167.

There can be nothing but praise for Professor Moore's thorough and well-written account of the varied literary components of *The Legend of Romeo and Juliet*. It is highly desirable to have gathered together the relevant details from the various sources, but it is even more valuable to have a scholar with wide knowledge in the field of comparative literature demonstrate the growth, and interrelations of the different versions. We have, in the past, been too prone to cite the names of various novelle or poems as Shakespeare's sources, and have failed to realize that these works were part of a developing literary tradition of which the Elizabethans and Shakespeare were aware.

The results of Professor Moore's study demonstrate clearly what is to be gained when the sources are examined from this point of view. First of all, we need no longer be concerned with either folklore or with assorted lost materials, for Professor Moore shows that the sources of the legend are literary and extant, and that Shakespeare needed no other materials than those which have survived. The Montecchi and Cappelletti of Dante are shown to be the names, not of families, but of political factions. The transformation of factions into warring families was due to confusion in the minds of fourteenth century commentators, not to a lost novella or poem.

Secondly, Professor Moore establishes the literary influence of Boccaccio on later writers. While the *Filostrato* has been discussed as a possible source, it is now evident that the *Decameron* and the *Filocolo* were far more important for such men as Masuccio and Da Porto. In the same vein, we realize how complicated, and at times how simple, the relations between the stories really are. For example, Clizia made far greater innovations in his rendition than did Arthur Brooke, although hitherto Brooke has been highly praised for his originality.

Finally, it now appears that Shakespeare must have had access to Da Porto as well as to Arthur Brooke, and Professor Moore does not find it necessary to posit a "lost" translation, rather he concludes that Shakespeare could read Italian. Surely the time has come to rid ourselves of the "ignorant Shakespeare" concept. If Will Kemp could play in *commedia dell'arte*, and if Ben Jonson with not much more formal schooling than Shakespeare could become a classical scholar, it would seem only reasonable to conclude that a university education was not the only means by which an Elizabethan learned a foreign language, and that Shakespeare could read both French and Italian.

C. T. PROUTY

Yale University

The Prefigurative Imagination of John Keats: A Study of the Beauty-Truth Identification and Its Implications. By NEWELL F. FORD. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1951. (University Series, Language and Literature, Volume IX, Number 2). Pp. 168. Paper bound, \$2.50.

This study examines Keats' theory of Beauty and Truth "by a more or less lexicographic method; the collation of all occurrences of 'truth' in Keats' writings, the study of their contexts, and the fixing, wherever possible, of the principal categories." It finds that Keats uses "truth" in two senses: one a "prefigurative" truth of imagination, the other the truth of the intellect, towards which he maintains for the most part an empiricist skepticism. Professor Ford knows Keats' writing, and he is methodical and often acute. He is inclined, however, to trust his method overmuch, and he seems to be plagued by a sense of his duty to disagree with orthodox Keats scholarship, his divergence from which is in the end by no means clear. His honesty and his thorough acquaintance with his subject have a way of interfering with his thesis.

This thesis, if I correctly understand it, is that Keats finds beauty only in concrete material objects, and the highest of all values in sexual ecstasy. All idealist interpretations are without exception misguided. Such words as "abstract," "essence," "ethereal," "empyrean," "spiritual," etc., have in Keats a meaning quite different from their usual significations, while on the other hand the idealist gloss of "sensation" ("O for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts") as "intuition" is disingenuous. *Endymion*, far from being a Platonic allegory, is the hero's quest for "an immortality of passion"—physical passion.

This nominalist and materialist conception of Keats appears to stem from irritation with what Ford thinks of as a hypocritical and nasty-nice Platonism in Keats scholarship. But he does not, despite conscientious documentation, manage to explain precisely what he is opposing, and in consequence is unable to state his own view with precision. I am, in fact, unable to see wherein this view differs from orthodoxy, save in emphasis, and the emphasis is a product of an arbitrary abstraction which reduces Keats to a part of himself. After banishing "idealism" and "transcendentalism" Professor Ford lets them in again by the back door. For if the imagination is permitted to be creative it is also transcendental, and even conceiving it as "prefigurative" of a literal reality, if Keats actually did so, will not save it from the soft impeachment of idealism. And if "'The Eve of St. Agnes' is an *idealization* [*italics mine*] of throbbing young love, passionate and corporeal" (p. 126), we are back where we started from, for few have claimed that it was anything else. Perhaps Ford is asserting that Keats

did not write systematic allegory, a conclusion with which almost everyone will readily agree.

The "lexicographic" examination of "beauty" and "truth" is interesting, but of less value than it might have been if the author had explained what meaning he himself attaches to the words. The method is not a guarantee of the result, and it might be reasonably argued that Ford's conclusion is arrived at by depriving "beauty" and "truth" of quite legitimate content. Conviction on such a point is of course a delicate and complex matter, but it seems to this reviewer that Ford has erred in applying the standard of common sense to an issue where common sense is only the point of departure.

RICHARD HARTER FOGLE

Tulane University

Steele at Drury Lane. By JOHN LOFTIS. Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1952. Pp. 260. \$4.00.

This is a rather long treatment in four parts of the early 18th century theatre-reform movement, with its political overtones; of Steele's management of Drury Lane Theatre; of his dispute with the Lord Chamberlain; and of his writing the *Conscious Lovers* in an effort to produce a living example of his theory of comedy as exemplary action rather than satirical thrust. Dr. Loftis concludes: "The record of Steele at Drury Lane was largely a record of quarrels—with Newcastle, with the critics of the *Conscious Lovers*, and with the Actor Managers. The genial, convivial Steele of the coffeehouses—the appealing figure who has won a place in the popular imagination—has had little place here, having been crowded out by the quarrelsome man Steele became after his good humor was soured by age, sickness, political reverses, and comparative poverty. Yet in the very vehemence of the quarrels he aroused—notably those with the Lord Chamberlain and with the critics of his play—something of his importance can be seen. The articulation he gave to contemporary views on stage government and on exemplary comedy by his disputes are a tribute if not to his good humour, at least to his rare degree of personal forcefulness."

This book is the obvious result of much plodding research into the pamphlets and newspapers of a prolific and articulate age: into the letters and lawsuits and life-records of a prolific and articulate literary figure. It is to be regretted, however, that the author did not further sift and compress the accumulation of details. Pruned to a tight hundred and twenty page monograph, well documented, with a corresponding reduction in price it might reach a wider

public than it probably now will. So compressed it would gain pace and absolve the reader from having to work through considerable repetition of ideas and details.

GEO. WINCHESTER STONE, JR.

The George Washington University

Politics in the American Drama as Revealed by Plays Produced on the New York Stage, 1890-1945. By CASPER HAROLD NANNES. Philadelphia, 1950. Pp. viii + 160.

This monograph is a laudable attempt to study the treatment of politics by American playwrights over a period of fifty-five years. If it is not the important contribution to literary and dramatic history the potentialities of the subject suggest, the fault lies mainly with the timidity which scholarship for the doctorate, in many cases, somehow seems to generate. Dr. Nannes has read a good many plays, the critical reviews of their productions, and much general literature on politics and sociology, and has painstakingly recorded the plots of the plays and their reflection of actual political situations. He has paid little or no attention to the cultural traditions and economic conditions of the American theatre which have often influenced the kind of treatment serious subjects have generally received in our drama.

Dr. Nannes admits that he has studied the plays "without primary regard as to their artistic worth," but he assumes, nevertheless, that they constitute a dramatic expression of what "the American people" were thinking about at a particular time. This is a questionable assumption. The exigencies of plot and the necessity to be, at all costs, entertaining, have often yielded artificial concoctions in which the ideational reflection appears both dim and false. Even the leading character in *State of the Union*, a play which Dr. Nannes presumably rates high, is more largely a reflection of the dramaturgic dexterity of Russel Crouse and Howard Lindsay than of the regard in which the American people held Wendell Wilkie.

Other easy assumptions deserve serious questioning. It is true that in 1904 Lincoln Steffens published *The Shame of the Cities* and that a few years later several plays dealing with political corruption appeared on the New York stage. Is one therefore justified in concluding that "One result of Lincoln Steffens' crusade was the appearance on the Broadway stage of several plays dealing with municipal corruption"? What if the playwrights had merely struck a current popular theme without the slightest indebtedness to Lincoln Steffens? And, incidentally, Clyde Fitch's *The City*

which "brought the cycle to an end," can hardly be included in this group at all, since Fitch was insistent upon blaming the corroding effects of city life for the deterioration of the character of George Rand, Jr. Why not accept the playwright's own thesis?

A few minor points of commission and omission must be raised. What is James B. Fagan's play *The Earth* doing in a discussion of American drama? Fagan was a British playwright and the scene of his play was England. And since Dr. Nannes has devoted sections to a consideration of the plays inspired by the Sacco-Vanzetti and the Scottsboro cases, should he not have also included a section on the plays which the Mooney case inspired? At least one such play, Israel Golden's *Precedent*, was received with considerable critical acclaim when it was produced in New York in 1931. And, lastly, if Maxwell Anderson's *Knickerbocker Holiday* reveals something of our political consciousness in the Thirties, is not the same author's *Valley Forge* equally revealing?

N. BRYLLION FAGIN

The Johns Hopkins University

Matthew Arnold, the Ethnologist. By FREDERIC E. FAVERTY. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1951. Pp. vi + 241.

Arnold took up the "pregnant and striking" notions of the ethnologists as part of his program for re-vivifying English manners and thought. He loved a generalization, and his method, in these matters, was always to seize upon the dominant trait of a race, the *pensée maitresse*, and exclude most if not all of the other traits. Thus he arrived at his formulas, which are too well known to be mentioned. The first and most obvious virtue of this book is that it reveals the great and surprizing extent to which Arnold's criticism is saturated by his speculations on race. The weighing of these speculations, except by implication, Professor Faverty leaves to Arnold's contemporaries, some of whom found them quite painful.

The historical approach gives to the book a certain good temper. Whereas several recent critics have been irritated — an irritation not difficult to work up, now that the race myth has been so thoroughly exploded — by Arnold's bland identification of language and race, Professor Faverty is content to show that this identification, which has wrought such havoc in the modern world, was generally held to in the nineteenth century. He leaves the reader with an unresolved paradox in his final paragraph, however, when he says that Arnold could not, or at least did not, rise above the *Zeitgeist* in his racial thinking, but he should be mildly rebuked, nevertheless, for not seeing to it that the light within him was not darkness.

The book is an excursion into Arnold's intellectual history. The references in his letters and elsewhere to Wilhelm von Humboldt, Bunsen, Schliermacher, take on new significance when we see Arnold, in his much-deplored religious works, following their lead in trying "to get rid of all that was purely Semitic in Christianity and to make it Indo-Germanic." But the greatest influence on Arnold as ethnologist was Ernest Renan. Though this fact is perhaps not new, Professor Faverty has given new emphasis to it and presented fuller evidence than has been previously done in its support. He says a significant essay could still be written on Arnold and Renan. Let us hope he writes it. In one respect, he has modified the accepted view of Renan's influence by showing that Henri Martin made a much larger contribution to Arnold's *On the Study of Celtic Literature* than did Renan. Professor Faverty's chapter on the Celt has been anticipated somewhat by Mr. John V. Kelleher's "Matthew Arnold and the Celtic Revival" in *Perspectives in Criticism*. Mr. Kelleher's belief that "Arnold's commentary [on the Celts] has gone virtually uncontradicted since it was made in 1866" is shown to be in error.

WILLIAM BLACKBURN

Duke University

BRIEF MENTION

D'Une Fame de Laon qui estoit jugie a ardoir que Nostre Dame delivra. Miracle versifié par Gautier de Coinci. Edition critique par VEIKKO VÄÄNÄNEN. Helsinki, 1951. Pp. 87. (*Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae*, vol. 68, 2). This addition to the publications of Gautier de Coinci's poems undertaken by Professor A. Långfors and his students arrives at the same time as the news that its editor has been chosen to succeed his teacher in the chair of Romance Philology at the University of Helsinki. Both master and pupil are to be congratulated. The edition is welcome, for Gautier's poem is closely related to one of the finest of the dramatized *Miracles de Notre Dame* (Copeau successfully produced it in Paris), and Väänänen is able to show that the playwright not only followed Gautier, appropriating outright some of his most effective passages, but also used certain Latin sources as well. Incidentally, this procedure of combining Latin and vernacular accounts seems to have been frequent among mediaeval dramatists. The Leningrad manuscript of Gautier's works (R) which served as basis for the editions of Långfors and Nurmela unfortunately seems to have vanished, but V., like von Kraemer, the recent editor of another of the miracles, employs a related manuscript (N) and eleven more of the eighteen known to him. Since he can refer so

often to the studies of his predecessors, his introduction seems a little dry and meagre. Certain material of general interest is omitted and, though this is understandable, one would nevertheless have appreciated some evaluation of the literary qualities of so famous a poem. However, V. adequately covers its Latin sources, relation to the dramatized version, rhymes and language; he gives a readable text and provides helpful notes and a glossary. With Poquet's edition of Gautier increasingly difficult to obtain, the various critical texts and other excellent studies coming out of Helsinki deserve the gratitude of all Old French scholars.

Baltimore

GRACE FRANK

Essays in Divinity. By JOHN DONNE. Edited by EVELYN M. SIMPSON. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952. Pp. xxvii + 137. As Donne scholars know the *Essays in Divinity* add no laurels to the literary renown of the poet or to the stylistic reputation of the Dean. It is the scholar and the hard thinking theologian, at home in the library of ancient authorities on divine matters, who comes out in this work. The essays can hardly be called *essays* in the modern sense of the word, rather they are attempts to put down before they vanish thoughts on minute aspects of the intricate science of theology or to refute, criticize, or harmonize what previous theologians had written about some aspect of divinity. It is really the portrait of the impending cleric thinking so constantly that he does not notice digressions, but the digressions do not prevent us from seeing that Hooker had taught him to think.

The book is a rich garner of matters that were later refined into the great sermons. Mrs. Simpson has found many of these unmilled ideas in the prose of the latter years. The style that we know so well is always so close to the surface of these lucubrations that it occasionally breaks through. The book, then, is particularly interesting to Donne scholars as a document in Donne's progress to perfection. Beyond that it has little place in the history of letters. Interestingly enough the volume is excessively rare. Wing found no more than ten copies. Jessopp's edition is likewise hard to come by, and Jessopp, compared to Mrs. Simpson, was an innocent and amateur editor. The new edition gives us a sound text, adequate notes, a finding list of authorities, and a useful and lucid preface. Mrs. Simpson is to be congratulated on this excellent addition to the Donne scholar's bookshelf.

D. C. A.

Poems. By NICHOLAS BRETON. Edited, with biography, canon and notes, by JEAN ROBERTSON. Liverpool University Press, 1952. Pp. clix + 229. 30s. In this volume Miss Robertson, whose able work is well known to American Renaissance scholars, has edited five poetical works of Breton which have not before been reprinted. The first of these reprints, *The Workes of a Young Wyt*, is a kind of literary autobiography in twenty-seven poems and is reminiscent of Gascoigne in subject matter and technique. The second, *Pasquils Mistresse*, is a conventional account of good and bad qualities in a woman; the third and fourth, *Olde Mad-cappes new Gally-mawfrey* and *Honest Counsaile* are on various didactic subjects. The last, *The Uncasing of Machivils Instructions to His Sonne*, is mainly interesting for the extension that it gives to the term *machiavellianism*. I rather imagine that this publication will not add to Breton's literary laurels since he mistook doggrel for poetry. In truth the value of the edition resides in its contributions to social history. The apparatus which Miss Robertson supplies is painstaking to the highest degree but it cannot pump life into these dry bones; one could wish that she had expended her energy and talent on a worthier text.

D. C. A.

The Celestial Cycle. By WATSON KIRKCONNEL. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1952. Pp. xxvii + 701. \$7.50. This is a full compendium of all the sensible analogues that have ever been found for *Paradise Lost*. The first part of the volume is devoted to the full texts of the better analogues in verse translation: Avitus' *Poemata*, the Caedmonian *Genesis*, Grotius' *Adamus Exul* (with the rare Latin text), Andreini's *L'Adamo*, Vondel's *Lucifer* and *Adam in Ballingschap*, etc. The latter section contains over three hundred minor analogues arranged chronologically from the Sumerian Paradise Myth to Paul Valéry's *Lust, la demoiselle de Cristal*. This is one of the most important additions, then, to the library of Miltonists in this century. Now those scholars who have talked to their students about the relation between *Paradise Lost* and a source like Serafino della Salandra's *Adamo Caduto* may read the latter for the first time. The gigantic effort of President Kirkconnell deserves the applause and gratitude of all. I should personally have been happier had the translator not fallen into the trap of verse renderings; a prose equivalent in rough poetic lines would have resulted in greater exactness and less work. As it is, he is sometimes forced to pad a line or twist the syntax for the sake of meter. This is a Victorian disease and it also appears in his preference for the pious archaism, but, lo, on the other hand, Allen, thou drawest thyself back before no hapless thing.

D. C. A.

CORRESPONDENCE

DIDEROT'S PENSÉE XIX. I. Mr. L. G. Crocker, writing of the 19th *Pensée philosophique* (MLN, November 1952, pp. 433-439), sees a "seeming contradiction between the denial of spontaneous generation" in the first part of the *Pensée* "and its apparent acceptance in the ensuing words: 'je puis admettre que le mécanisme de l'insecte le plus vil n'est pas moins merveilleux que celui de l'homme, et ne crains pas qu'on en infère qu'une agitation intestinale des molécules étant capable de donner l'un, il est vraisemblable qu'elle a donné l'autre'" (p. 435). Mr. Crocker solves the difficulty by saying that the *Pensée* partly admits but largely rejects spontaneous generation. This statement is supported by the admission of one Francesco Redi that while he (Redi) had in 1674 experimentally disproved the spontaneous generation of worms in decaying meat, nevertheless the phenomenon could take place "in the intestines or other internal passages of human beings." Mr. Crocker assumes, but presents no evidence, that Diderot was acquainted with Redi's stand, adding that "the italicized phrase [in the Diderot passage] can be explained *only* in relation to the work of Redi" (p. 436; italics mine). Mr. Crocker thus understands "agitation intestinale" to mean agitation in human intestines; he assumes Diderot's knowledge and approval of Redi; he offers evidence from other Diderot writings to show that spontaneous generation is there accepted.

I agree that the wording of the second part of the *Pensée* is ambiguous; I therefore disagree that Redi's notion provides the "only" solution to the difficulty. While the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* (1694 edition) authorizes Diderot to use "intestin" in an anatomical connotation, 18th-Century usage seems to have been rather "intestinal" (for example *Encyclopédie*, s. v. "Chyle" in III, 403, col. 1, and *passim*; Furetière, 1727 edition, reserves anatomical connotation for "intestinal"). There is moreover no suggestion in the text of the *Pensée* that the agitation, whether of molecules within themselves or within something else, takes place within human intestines. If Diderot means "intestinal" one would expect some explanation of the use of "intestin."

I suggest that it is quite possible that there is no contradiction whatever in *Pensée* XIX. It states, if I read it correctly, that knowledge of nature makes true Deists. These are set up in contrast to the Metaphysicians ("l'Ontologie," misprinted uncapitalized in Mr. Crocker's article) and the Atheists. The Metaphysician is not experimentally acquainted with nature; he can therefore be confounded by the Atheist and the Deist. Metaphysics leads at most to doubt; Atheism means denial; hence only the Deist can positively affirm God's existence and support the affirmation with the irrefutable evidence of nature. Part of this evidence disproves spontaneous generation; motion in matter cannot create life, but only bring about developments. A believer in spontaneous generation must by definition believe that insects are made by this means; he may therefore logically proceed to declare for spontaneous generation of man. But the evi-

dence falsifies the notion; furthermore it is possible to admit that insect and human organisms are equally marvelous without either subscribing to or being contradicted by the theory that they are produced by molecules travailing within themselves. Two centuries earlier there were no Deists, and the Metaphysician would have found the atheist argument based on spontaneous generation unanswerable. Today, thanks to his knowledge of nature, and specifically of the existence of germs, the Deist can effectively answer objections from either side.

Pensée XIX thus interpreted would occupy its proper place in Diderot's line of thought between Pensées XVIII and XX, just as Mr. Crocker says it does; but it would not weaken the whole argument by contradicting itself. Mr. Crocker's difficulty would then disappear, and Signor Redi would be gratuitous.

JAMES DOOLITTLE

Ohio State University

DIDEROT'S PENSÉE XIX. II. Among the several problems raised by Dr. Crocker's recent interpretation of Diderot's "Pensée XIX," only the most serious may be discussed here in the short space allowed. Dr. Crocker sees in Diderot's text an acceptance of abiogenesis as regards the origins of minute organisms in the "intestines and other internal passages." He adds that, for Diderot, such instances of spontaneous generation do not, however, imply that higher forms of life, such as man, could possibly be explained in the same manner, for the origins of these latter require *germes* in all cases.¹ This interpretation presents three major difficulties. First, it renders "Pensée XIX" so hopelessly self-contradictory as to reduce its defense of deism to nonsense. The whole force of the deist's argument against the atheistic hypothesis for the origin of things has been the empirical premise that spontaneous generation does *not* exist in nature: "la putréfaction seule ne produit rien d'organisé." To admit this in one instance would be to admit it as a physical principle—which is precisely what the deist must deny, lest his adversary be free to suppose that all beings had originally come into existence by such a process. Nothing, incidentally, illustrates this point more aptly than Diderot's own subsequent intellectual evolution from deism to materialism. This suggests the second objection to Dr. Crocker's analysis, which may be said to obscure, rather than to clarify, the crucial early development of Diderot's thought. This general problem is soluble, logically as well as historically, if we assume that only *after* the *Pensées philosophiques* Diderot accepted, as against the teleological *germe* theory of 1746, both the data and the speculative implications furnished by certain bio-

¹ *MLN*, LXVII, 7 (Nov. 1952), pp. 436-37. I keep the French "*germe*" here to denote the special meaning and connotations in the eighteenth century of this term, which is not equivalent to Dr. Crocker's "germ cell" in modern usage. The proper definition of *germe* ought, incidentally, to obviate the "philological" differences between myself and Dr. Crocker cited in his article.

logical events favorable to abiogenesis, such as Trembley's polyp, Bonnet's discovery of parthenogenesis, and Needham's microscopic observations of Infusoria. In fact, Dr. Crocker cites from the *Rêve de D'Alembert* a most significant passage, bearing on just this issue, which itself contradicts the "logic" of his interpretation of "Pensée XIX." This is the reference to Needham's "anguilles," where Diderot argues analogically from the presumed spontaneous generation of a certain class of micro-organisms to the spontaneous formation of the cosmos and all living species. Such being the philosophical method of Diderot's mind, what could not the atheist of 1746 have made of the heterogenetical appearance of Dr. Crocker's "intestinal worms"?

Lastly, Dr. Crocker's version misreads, I believe, Diderot's actual words, which may be clarified as follows. If an atheist were granted a single instance of spontaneous generation, even of "l'insecte le plus vil," he could extend this principle analogically all the way up to man (as Diderot was himself to do in 1749 once he had accepted the consequences of Needham's findings), since all animate things are as *organisms* essentially the same and equally marvelous. But in 1746 Diderot does not mind conceding to the materialist such a proposition based on analogy ("je puis admettre que le mécanisme de l'insecte le plus vil n'est pas moins merveilleux que celui de l'homme"), because the latter will not be able to infer from it ("je ne crains pas qu'on en infère") that, the inner motions of molecules being capable of producing the lowliest insect, they could also engender man. They could not engender man, because (as Diderot has already affirmed categorically) they do not in fact produce the lowliest insect. Thus, the clause taken by Dr. Crocker to be a positive assertion by the deistic Diderot is simply a contrary-to-fact affirmation by the atheist he is combating. But if, before Redi's experiments and the resultant triumph of *germes*, an atheist had advanced such a hypothetical inference from the supposed abiogenesis of certain low forms of life, no amount of metaphysical reasoning could have discredited this so effectively as the empirical evidence of *germes* has since done. This reading offers a simple elucidation of the various problems raised by Diderot's text. There is no need, consequently, for Dr. Crocker's ingenious explanation of "agitation intestinale des molécules" as an allusion to Redi's theories and translatable as "agitation of molecules in the intestines or internal passages." The use of "intestine" for "intestinale" in such a context would have been most unusual in Diderot's time, and especially by someone so well-informed about the latest in scientific usage. The phrase in question is nothing but a slightly elliptical formula (infinitely less cryptic than the proposed reference to Redi) for the process of spontaneous generation itself (as described, for example, in Bk. II of *De rerum natura*), and may be rendered as "the inner agitations of the molecules of matter," or more simply, "the motions of the molecules within matter."

The deism of the *Pensées philosophiques* resting, as it did, on the presumed regularity of generation by means of divinely-contrived *germes*, the vitalist biology of the 1740's proved to be the immediate motivation for Diderot's transition to materialism. Dr. Crocker's treatment of this subject, too, is not entirely accurate. He writes: "New life was given to

abiogenesis by Leuwenhoek's discovery of 'infusoria' . . . which could not then be explained except heterogenetically"; and also, "Leuwenhoek's conclusions were confirmed by Needham."² In reality, Leuwenhoek's discovery did not quite reinstate abiogenesis; he himself assumed that Infusoria multiplied by reproduction. Abiogenesis did, however, become a "possibility," since the *germes* of Infusoria were microscopically undetectable. But in the first half of the eighteenth century preformationist thought so completely dominated the scientific scene, that the burden of proof was on those who might wish to defend the all but eclipsed theory of heterogenesis. As a result, it was an intellectual event of dramatic novelty when Needham reopened the entire issue of spontaneous generation by a series of experiments tending to show positively that Infusoria were engendered from putrefaction without benefit of *germes*. The impact of this empirical evidence, as presented both by Needham and by Buffon, not only worked a radical change in the scientific status of abiogenesis, but was felt in France in exactly the brief interim between the *Pensées philosophiques* and the *Lettre sur les aveugles*. It apparently was sufficient to destroy the deistic argument based on the unqualified rejection of abiogenesis in the former work, and to authorize the atheist of 1749 to conjecture that "dans le commencement . . . la matière en fermentation faisait éclore l'univers."

Harvard University

ARAM VARTANIAN

DIDEROT'S PENSÉE XIX. Reply. I am surprised and flattered at the amount of comment, both favorable and otherwise, that my brief article has elicited. I shall attempt to reply, as best I can, to the criticisms of the second part of the article, here printed.

Dr. Doolittle insists that I limit the meaning of "intestin" to "intestines." My use of italics in the phrase, "in the *intestines* or other *internal passages*," and the purposeful use of quotation marks in the subsequent phrase, "organic material in the 'intestines' . . .," was intended to indicate that I take Diderot to use the word not only, or not especially, in the narrow sense, but in the larger sense of what is internal to a body. In order to emphasize the relation to Redi, I was paraphrasing, more than translating, Diderot's own vocabulary. I think this will be recognized in an open-minded reading of my text.¹

² *Loc. cit.*, p. 437. Dr. Crocker errs, as a glance at the "Avertissement du Traducteur" will make clear, in attributing to Trembley the French translation (1747) of Needham's *New Microscopical Discoveries*. Also, Lavirotte did not retranslate the same work in 1750, as Dr. Crocker adds, but an entirely new work by Needham, which was published along with the previous text of 1747 under the title of *Nouvelles Observations microscopiques*.

¹ For this meaning there is ample justification. Cf. *Dictionnaire de l'Académie*, Furetière (*q. v.*, contrary to my critic: "le mouvement intestin des parties insensibles du sang"), Poitevin, Littré, etc. It is curious that Dr. Doolittle again misreads me on another score. Redi refers to human beings, but I interpret Diderot's thought as applying to "a living animal."

Whereas I understand Diderot to mean that the molecules are agitated internally, that is, *within the body*, Dr. Doolittle has them agitated *within themselves*, an idea I can nowhere recall in Diderot's writings; an idea that corresponds to twentieth century science, but that Diderot could not easily have dreamed of without knowledge of modern atomic theory. But he does refer in his writings to the molecules *within bodies* being constantly in movement and interaction, and that is what I take him to mean here.

It is only obvious that the word "germe" did not convey our present notion of reproductive cells, and it should be assumed that the eighteenth century usage was understood. If we hold in mind the differences of concept, as we should, I think the phrase "germ cell" is the proper equivalent, since terminology often persists when its content changes, and there is in this case the same clear opposition (even if the preformation or incase-ment theories are understood), with the contrary theory of abiogenesis. We are not, in such cases, required to use the original French words.

Dr. Doolittle's phrase, "one Francesco Redi," leads me to wonder how well acquainted he is with the history of science in the period. Redi's work was outstanding, universally famous (see any history of science or biology); the title I referred to had five seventeenth and eighteenth century editions in Italian and Latin (not to mention his other writings on the subject, and a twentieth century American translation). In view of Diderot's remarkable knowledge of the scientific writings of his time (see any book on Diderot or any article on this phase)—a knowledge which is in evidence in the *Pensées*—it is the assumption that he was *not* acquainted with Redi's work that is gratuitous. That anyone in the 1740's who was intensely interested in biology, and especially in abiogenesis and its philosophical implications, should be ignorant of Redi, one of the most remarkable investigators in the field, is simply inconceivable. This is aside from the fact that Redi's thought, if accepted, offers a simple explanation of the passage.² Diderot's writing in *Pensée XIX* is typical of the terse, condensed style of many of his notes and Thoughts, which forego specific reference to the book which he *does* have in mind, and show a carry-over of a word, phrase or thought it suggested to him.

I do not think that my interpretation renders Diderot's *Pensée* contradictory, unless we approach it with the concepts of our own day. My very purpose was to prove that a seeming contradiction does not really exist. The uncertainty about the origin and reproduction of life, about scientific law in general, was great at the time Diderot wrote, and the universal applicability of a given scientific law was not always conceived as cogent. For instance, Diderot holds that two different laws of refraction are necessary, for large and small bodies, and possibly two laws of gravitation. Considering the scientific concepts and knowledge of the time, there was no necessary contradiction in his mind between the possibility of spontaneous generation for lower forms of life (either in general, or under the special circumstances referred to), and germ reproduction for the higher. The

² Niklaus, in his critical edition, also refers briefly to Redi as the source of this passage (p. 13), as does Assézat (*Oeuvres*, I, 133). I do not stand alone.

theory of evolution was not developed; if abiogenesis accounted for the lower forms, it did not have to be accepted for the higher. There is, further, no contradiction with the phrase, "*la putréfaction seule ne produit rien d'organisé*," since the abiogenetic life admitted can occur only in the presence of matter already living.

In no way are we required, or even tempted to suppose that Diderot's reasoning in 1746 was the same as it will be in 1769, twenty-three years later. The first period was for him one of hesitations and uncertainties, while at the later date, his already formed, dogmatic materialism would have naturally led him to draw different conclusions. There is no logical or historical necessity to assume that Diderot was not already, in 1746, considering the implications and weight of abiogenetic theories in his total evaluation of the problem. How this would "obscure" the development of his thought I do not see, unless we insist that development must have taken place in simple patterns. He was, after all, seeking a decisive answer, to annihilate the atheist, if such a one could be found. If abiogenetic theories, such as Redi's supposed discovery, could be admitted, and yet shown to be of no weight as an argument against deism, his presentation would be not "nonsense," but all the stronger. It is my feeling that Diderot's argument is not so simplistic as to say, there is no spontaneous generation, therefore the atheist is refuted. He is leaving the door open to spontaneous generation of lower forms in an organic environment, and denying it to higher forms that require a germ cell, so that even if spontaneous generation is true, it is no conclusive argument against deism.

Of the alternative explanations offered, Dr. Doolittle's appears to me somewhat involved and confused. The chief point here is the statement that the believer in spontaneous generation of insects may logically conclude for the spontaneous generation of man; whereas I hold Diderot to affirm that he may *not* proceed to spontaneous generation of man. If it is possible to admit that both organisms are equally marvelous, "without either subscribing to or being contradicted" by spontaneous generation, it is precisely because one cannot logically pass from the creation of one to that of the other.

Dr. Vartanian's interpretation is plausibly set forth, well argued, and deserves the most serious consideration. He attributes to the atheist the thought, "*l'agitation intestine des molécules étant capable de donner l'un*" (i. e., the vilest insect), and to Diderot, "they do not in fact produce the lowliest insect." But is it the atheist who makes the first statement, or Diderot? Is the inference the atheist cannot make that "the molecules can produce the one," or that the possibility of producing the one involves "the probability that it also produces the other?" Dr. Vartanian reads "*étant capable de donner l'un*" as an affirmation which is being denied; I read it as a concession, designed to make the argument stronger, syntactically in opposition to the following clause. Just because the mechanism of a vile insect is as marvelous as that of men (but not necessarily "essentially the same"), and it may be possible for it to arise, under certain circumstances, without "*germes*," one cannot argue that the higher forms

of life have come into being the same way. Diderot is not afraid of such an inference about man.²

I am not attached to my own interpretation by any point of pride. The passage is a difficult one, and I should be most satisfied if my article were the means of bringing to light its correct meaning. In doing so, we must take into account the climate of imprecise thought, the hesitations of Diderot's mind and the character of his "logic" such as we see it in this work and even in the *Pensées sur l'interprétation de la nature*. Further, the passage is loosely phrased and ambiguous. Two persons of highest competence to whom I submitted it after writing the body of this reply, read it first as I did; after seeing Dr. Vartanian's interpretation, they were surprised, then agreed it was certainly an admissible reading. I should be less than frank if I did not do as much, and admit that my own certainty is now less than it was.

L. G. CROCKER

Goucher College

DIDEROT'S PENSÉE XIX. Rejoinder. The reader will judge for himself both the extent to which I misread Mr. Crocker's article and the merits of our respective interpretations of Pensée XIX. He will also note that my remarks are offered as suggestions, not as proof. Since Mr. Crocker's article claims to determine definitively Diderot's view of spontaneous generation in Pensée XIX, I think the responsibility for proof is his. My complaint is that Mr. Crocker has produced no concrete evidence to justify either of two assumptions upon which an essential part of his claim is based. Like Mr. Niklaus and Assézat, Mr. Crocker appears simply to suppose that Diderot knows and agrees with Redi. He shows that Diderot was authorized to use "intestine" in Mr. Crocker's now documented understanding of the word, but not that he so used it in Pensée XIX or elsewhere. I can accept as conjectural, but certainly not as definitive, a conclusion based upon unsupported assumptions, however justifiable they may seem. While I still disagree with his conclusion, Mr. Crocker has (unless I misread again) obviated my objection and made a possible case by stating his view conditionally: Redi's thought, in the article the "only" key to Diderot's phrase, now, "if accepted, offers a simple explanation of the passage."

JAMES DOOLITTLE

Ohio State University

² I cannot argue with Dr. Vartanian as to whether Leuwenhoek's discovery "quite reinstated abiogenesis" or made it possible or probable. Here I have based my statement on recognized authorities. My bibliographical information about Lavirotte's translation was also taken from accepted sources and I regret having helped to perpetuate an error, if it is such.

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